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The practical works of the
Rev. Richard Baxter



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THE
PRACTICAL WORKS
OF THE
REV. RICHARD BAXTER.

THE

PRACTICAL WORKS

OF

THE REV. RICHARD BAXTER:

WITH

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

AND

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF HIS WRITINGS,

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM ORME,

AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE OF JOHN OWEN, D.D.;" "BIBLIOTHECA BIBLICA," ETC.

IN TWENTY-THREE VOLUMES.

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THE CERTAIN NECESSITY AND EXCELLENCY OF HOLINESS, &c. SO
PLAINLY PROVED, AND URGENTLY APPLIED, AS, BY THE
BLESSING OF GOD, MAY CONVINCE AND SAVE THE MI-
SERABLE, IMPENITENT, UNGODLY SENSUALISTS,
IF THEY WILL NOT LET THE DEVIL HINDER
THEM FROM A SOBER AND SERIOUS READ-
ING AND CONSIDERING.

TO BE COMMUNICATED BY THE CHARITABLE, THAT DESIRE THE
CONVERSION AND SALVATION OF SOULS, WHILE THE PATIENCE
OF GOD, AND THE DAY OF GRACE AND HOPE
CONTINUE.

ADMONITORY EPISTLE.

To my dearly beloved Friends, the Inhabitants of Kidderminster in Worcestershire; and my late Auditors in the City of London. Confirming grace, with patience, love, and peace, be multiplied.

DEAR FRIENDS,

ONCE more, through the great mercy of God, I have liberty to send you a preacher for your private families, which may speak to you (truly and plainly, though not elegantly) when I cannot, and when I lie silent in the dust. I take it for no small mercy, that I have been so much employed about the great and necessary things, in despite of all the malice of satan, who would have entangled me, and taken up my time, in personal vindications and barren controversies. As I never knew that I had one enemy in the world that ever was acquainted with me; so those that know me, dissuading me from apologies against the accusations of those that know me not, have spared my time for better work. Though there are about fifty writings (in whole or part) against me published (by Infidels, Seekers, Familists, Enthusiasts, Quakers, Papists, Antinomians, Levellers, Covenant-breakers, State-subverters, Church-dividers, besides impatient dissenting brethren, and dependents that took it for the rising way), I yet find no cause (as to the present age, and those that know me) to be at any great care or pains for a defence; while malicious lies do make men wonder, that wrinkled envy should be so mad as to come so naked on the stage, and shew her ugly deformities to the world, and could not stay at least till wit had helped her to a cloak.

I was also, when I first intended writing, under another temptation; being of their mind that thought that nothing

should be made public, but what a man had first laid out his most choice art upon; I thought to have acquainted the world with nothing but what was the work of time and diligence. But my conscience soon told me, that there was too much of pride and selfishness in this; and that humility and self-denial required me to lay by the affectation of that style, and spare that industry, which tended but to advance my name with men, when it hindered the main work, and crossed my end. And providence drawing forth some popular, unpolished discourses, and giving them success beyond my expectation, did thereby rebuke my selfish thoughts, and satisfy me that the truths of God do perform their work more by their divine authority, and proper evidence, and material excellency, than by any ornaments of fleshly wisdom. And (as Seneca saith) though I will not despise an elegant physician, yet will I not think myself much the happier, for his adding eloquence to his healing art. Being encouraged then, by reason and experience, I venture these popular sermons into the world; and especially for the use of you, my late auditors, that heard them. I bless God that, when more worthy labourers are fain to weep over their obstinate, unprofitable, unthankful people, and some are driven away by their injuries, and put to shake off the dust of their feet against them; I am rather forced to weep over my own unthankful heart, that did not sufficiently value the mercy of a faithful flock, who parted with me rather as the Ephesians with Paul (Acts xx. 37.), and who have lived according to this plain and necessary doctrine which they had received. Among whom, Papists, that persuade men that our doctrine tendeth to divisions, can find no divisions or sects, who have constantly disowned both the ambitious usurpations which have shaken the kingdom; and the factions, censoriousness, and cruel violence in the church, which pride hath generated and nourished in this trying age. Among whom I have enjoyed so very large a proportion of mercy, in the liberty of so long an exercise of my ministry, with so unusual advantage and success, that I must be disingenuously unthankful if I should murmur and repine at the present restraining hand of God. But I must say with David, (2 Sam. xv. 25.) "If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me the ark and habitation (there or elsewhere use me in his service).

But if he say, I have no delight in thee, behold here I am, let him do to me as it seemeth good unto him."

And now with this treatise, let me leave you these few seasonable requests.

1. Be faithful to your faithful pastors. Think not that you can live in order and safety without their ministry. When you can, attend their public ministry; refuse not their more private help. Read well my two sheets for the Ministry. Where the lawful pastor is, there the church is. Be not either impiously indifferent in your worshipping of God, or peevishly quarrelsome with what is commanded or practised by others, nor disobedient to authority in lawful things.

2. Maintain still your ancient love, and unity, and peace among yourselves, and improve your company and converse to the advantage of your souls. Be daily interlocutory preachers to one another. Speak as the oracles of God; and preach by a holy, patient, harmless, charitable and heavenly life. This kind of preaching none can silence but your own corruptions.

3. Improve the profitable books which are among you. 1. Read them frequently, and reverently, and seriously to your families, when you have called them together, and prayed for God's blessing. 2. Carry them abroad with you, and when you fall into company where you cannot better spend your time, read to them some seasonable passage of such writings. 3. Give or lend them to those that need, and want either purses or hearts to provide them; and get them to promise you to read them, and inquire after the success. By such improvement, books may become such seconds or substitutes for public preaching, as that they may not be the least support of religion, and means to men's edification and salvation.

4. Make special and diligent provision to satisfy yourselves and others against popery, which is like to be none of the least of your temptations. To this end I pray you read well the single sheet against Popery which I published, and give of them abroad to others where there is need. Read also my other books against it: my "Safe Religion," and "Key for Catholics," and "Dispute with Mr. Johnson," and Dr. Challoner's "Credo Sanctam Ecclesiam Catholicam;" and when their sophistry puzzleth you, 1. Call your able pastors to debate it. 2. And remember that they have the

Scripture and the far greater part of the universal church, and the senses of all the world to confute, before they can make good the cause of their ambitious clergy. If you are but sure you know bread and wine when you see, and feel, and smell, and taste them, then you are at the end of controversy with the Papists. Above all, see that you maintain the love of God, and a heavenly mind, and mortified affections, and grow not opinionative, superficial, or loose in your religion. For he that is heartily of no religion, is prepared to be of any religion. And it is because men are false to the acknowledged truth, that they are given up to make a religion of deceit and falsehood. Your fidelity to your king and country, obligeth you to do your part to preserve the subjects from a disease so injurious to them. Saith Dr. Sherman, in his late "Account of Faith" against the Papists, Pref. p. 4, 5. 'If kings would think upon it, there might be no popes; since if popes could well help it, there should be no kings.'

5. Take heed of all temptations to turbulent resisting of authority, or other unlawful means in the obeying of your passions or discontents. As God chose most eminently to glorify his power under the law of works, and the spirit of bondage to fear did much prevail; but under the Gospel he hath chosen most eminently to magnify his goodness, love, and mercy; so accordingly is the impress made upon his servants' hearts. They are animated by love, for the propagating of love, and therefore must work with instruments of love. And if we had well learned the doctrine and example of our Lord, and made it our work to love all, and to do good to all, and hurt to none, and with meekness and patience to let any hurt us, rather than do any thing for our own defence, which is against the law of love, we should see that Christianity would better thrive, when it would be better understood by the practice of the professors. Often have I noted that a whole flock of sheep will run away from the smallest dog, and yet there are few of them killed by dogs, because they are under their master's care; whereas, a wolf or fox is pursued by all, and few of them suffered to live. And oft have I observed, that when men that shift for themselves can scarce pass the streets, yet children play in the way of carts and coaches without hurt, while every one takes it for his care to preserve them, that cannot take care of, and

preserve themselves. And though the deer that is within the park is killed when the owner please, yet he is preserved there from others, when the wild and straggling deer that are abroad, are a prey to any man that can catch or kill them. He that saveth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth it for Christ shall save it.

The Lord establish, strengthen, direct, and preserve you to his kingdom, and keep you from the passions of corrupted nature, and from the snares and rage of a deceitful, malicious world. I beseech you continue yet your prayers for him that desireth no greater advancement in the world, than to be

The servant of Christ, and

Helper of your joy,

RICH. BAXTER.

June 7, 1662.

A SAINT OR A BRUTE.

THE FIRST PART.

Shewing the Necessity of Holiness.

INTRODUCTION.

TO ALL SUCH AS NEGLECT, DISLIKE, OR QUARREL AT A LIFE
OF TRUE AND SERIOUS GODLINESS.

IT hath been the matter of my frequent admiration, how it can be consistent with the natural self-love and reasonableness of mankind, and the special ingenuity of some above others, for men to believe that they must die, and after live in endless joy or misery, according to their preparations in this life, and yet to make no greater a matter of it, nor set themselves with all their might to inquire what they must be, and do, if they will be saved; but to make as great a business and bustle to have their wills and pleasure for a little while, in the small impertinent matters of this world, as if they had neither hopes or fears of any greater things hereafter. That as some melancholy persons are ‘*cætera sani*,’ as rational as other men in all matters saving some one, in which yet their deliration maketh them the pity or derision of observers; so many that have wit enough to avoid fire and water, and to go out of the way from a wild beast or a madman, yet have not the wit to avoid damnation, nor to prefer eternal life before a merry passage unto hell. Yea, that some that account themselves ingenious, and men of a deeper reach than the unlearned, can see no further through the promises or threatenings of God, than through a prospective or a tube, and have no wit that looketh beyond a grave; yea, are ready to smile at the simplicity of those

that care whether they live in heaven or hell, and use but as much diligence for their salvation, as they use themselves for that which Paul accounted dung.

Many a time I have wondered how the devil can thus abuse a man of reason, and such as think themselves no fools! and how such inexpressible dotage can stand with either learning, ingenuity, or common understanding; and what shift the devil and these men make to keep them from seeing, that have eyes, or from seeing the heavens, that can see the smallest dust or atom. But my admiration is abated, when I consider that the wit that serveth to move a puppet is not enough to rule a kingdom; and that sleeping reason is as none; and that it is the very art and business of the devil to charm sinners to sleep and wake at once. ‘*Dormire Deo, at mundo vigilare;*’ to be asleep to God, and awake to the world. And that present things engage the senses, and call off reason from its work; and that the seeming distance of the life to come, occasioneth the neglect of stupid, half-believing souls, till they find it is indeed at hand; even as death, though certain, affecteth few in youth and health, as it doth when they perceive that they must presently be gone. And withal, that a man is not a man in act till he be considerate; and that it is as good to be without eyes, as still to wink. We know what detained ourselves so long in sleep and folly, and we know what makes us yet so slow, and therefore we may know what it is that thus unmaneth others.

Reader, if thou be one of these unhappy souls; Whether thy brain be so sick as really to think that there is no life to come for man, or that there needs no such care and diligence to prepare for it; or whether thy heart be so corrupt and bad as to be against the things which thou confessest to be good and necessary; or whether thy reason be cast so fast asleep, as never soberly to consider of the only thing of everlasting consequence and concernment to thyself; or whether thy heart be grown so dead and stupid, as to be past feeling, and never moved or affected with the things which thou hearest and knowest, and considerest to be so great and necessary; which ever of these be thy sad condition, I have now this one request to thee, as a friend that truly desireth thy salvation; and I tender it to thee with as earnest a desire, as if thou sawest me upon my knees en-

treating thee for the Lord's sake, and for thy soul's sake, and as ever thou hopest for the comfort of a dying man, and as ever thou carest what becomes of thy soul for ever, and as ever thou wilt answer it to Christ and thy own conscience with peace at last, that thou neither deny me, nor put me off with a careless reading, nor with contempt or disregard. My request to thee is but this reasonable thing, That thou wilt so long make a stand in thy way, and grant me so much of thy time, as once to read throughout this treatise, and SERIOUSLY to CONSIDER of what thou readest, and heartily to beg of God upon thy knees, to teach thee and lead thee into the truth, and then to be true to God and to thy conscience, and resolvedly to do that which thou art convinced is right, and best, and necessary. This is all my request to thee at the present. Put me not off with a denial or neglect, as thou wilt answer it to God, and as thou wilt not be a wilful self-condemner. Hast thou spent so many hours and days in vain, and cannot I beg a few hours of thee, to read and think of thy everlasting state? If thou darest not read and think of what can be said about such things as these, it is a sign thy case is indeed so bad, that thou hast more need than others to read and think of them. I know the devil dare not give thee leave to do it, if he can hinder thee; for fear lest thy eyes should be opened to see, and thy heart awakened to feel the things which he so laboureth to keep away from thy sight and feeling, till it be too late. And wilt thou grant him his desire to thy damnation, or Christ and his servants their desire to thy salvation? Think of it well before thou answer it by word or deed.

Being in hope that thou hast granted my request, (to read, consider, pray for help, and faithfully do what God shall teach thee,) I shall now begin to open thee the way to the matter of this treatise. The sum of my business is to teach thee, (1 Tim. iv. 8.) that "bodily exercise (in religion) profiteth little, but godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." I think it meet therefore to tell thee here in the beginning, what Godliness is, which the apostle distinguisheth from 'bodily exercise,' in matters of religion, and which I have proved so necessary and excellent in this treatise. And this I must do; 1. Lest thou deceive thy soul by

taking something else for Godliness. 2. And lest thou lose thy labour in the reading of this book, and hearing what Scripture and preachers say for Godliness. And 3. Lest thou wrong me and thyself, (according to the custom of this malicious age,) by imagining that by Godliness, I mean either superstition, or hypocrisy, or schism, or that I am persuading thee to sedition, humour, or needless singularity, under the name of Godliness and religion. I shall therefore tell you distinctly here, What Godliness is indeed; and what it is not.

In general, GODLINESS is our DEVOTEDNESS to GOD. And all these things following are essential to it, and of indispensable necessity to salvation.

I. That materially it contains these three things.

1. The true internal principle, soul, and life of Godliness; which is the Spirit of God; Rom. viii. 9. The Divine nature; 2 Pet. i. 4. The new, and soft, and single heart; Jer. xxxii. 39. Ezek. xi. 19. The seed of God abiding in us; 1 John iii. 9.

2. The intention of the true ends of Godliness; which is the reward in heaven; Matt. v. 11, 12. Luke xviii. 22. Matt. vi. 20, 21. Rom. viii. 17, 18. The pleasing of God and the beatifical vision and fruition of him with Christ and his triumphant church in the New Jerusalem for ever.

3. The reception and observation of the true rule of Godliness; which is the will of God revealed partly in nature, and fully in the Holy Scriptures. This must be in our very hearts; Psal. xxxvii. 31. Jer. xxxi. 33. and with delight we must meditate in it day and night; Psal. i. 2. To cast away and despise the law of God, is the brand of the rebellious; Isa. v. 24.

II. It is essential to Godliness that it formally contains these three relations.

1. It is a devotedness of ourselves, as HIS OWN, to GOD as our OWNER, or Proprietary, or Lord; quitting all pretence to any co-ordinate title to ourselves, and resigning ourselves, absolutely, (and all that we have) to him that by the right of creation and redemption is our Lord; Psal. c. 3. cxix. 94. John xvii. 6.

2. Godliness containeth a devotedness of ourselves as subjects, to God as our supreme and absolute Governor, to rule us by his laws, his officers, and his Spirit; to give up

ourselves to be ruled by him as our King ; to learn of him as our Teacher ; to work for him as our Master ; to fight under him and follow him as our Captain and Commander ; Isa. lxiii. 19. ix. 6. Luke xix. 27, &c.

3. Godliness containeth a devotedness of ourselves as beneficiaries to God in Christ as our great Benefactor in love and gratitude ; or as children to our reconciled Father, to love him, and thankfully obey him, and depend on him, and be happy in his love.

III. It is essential to Godliness, and necessary to salvation, that this devotedness to God be with a true renunciation, resistance, and forsaking of three great contraries or enemies to God and us.

1. Of the devil ; as the deceiver and principle of wickedness.

2. Of the world (its profits, honours, and pleasures), as the bait by which the devil would deceive us, and steal away our hearts from God, and take up our time, and turn our thoughts from the one thing necessary.

3. Of the flesh, as the rebelling faculty that would exalt itself above our reason, and be pleased before God, and so would take its pleasure as our felicity and end, instead of the true felicity and end.

IV. It is essential to Godliness subjectively, that God have the preeminence above all creatures ; 1. In the habitual estimation of our judgments, preferring him as the Most Great, and Wise, and Good, before all others. 2. In the will's habitual consent and choice ; refusing all in comparison of him, and choosing him as our Lord, our Ruler, and our Best, and consenting truly to the relations in which he is offered to us. 3. In the will's resolution to seek him and obey him, and endeavour to express these inward principles, so as to prefer no competitor before him.

V. The soul, or internal part of Godliness consisting essentially in the things already mentioned ; the body of it, or Godliness expressive and visible consisteth in these three things.

1. In our covenant with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier ; our Owner, Governor, and Father (or Benefactor). It is essential to visible, expressive Godliness, that there be such a covenant made ; and regularly it is to be solemnized by baptism. And

those that are baptized in infancy, must necessarily renew, and perform it themselves when they come to age, and that understandingly, deliberately, freely, and seriously.

2. Godliness visible and expressive consisteth in our profession of that devotedness to God, and that forsaking of the devil, the world, and the flesh, which we have before described as the essence of internal godliness, and to which in the holy covenant we oblige ourselves. Christ will be confessed before men, and will be ashamed of them before God and angels, who are so far ashamed of him before men, as ordinarily to refuse to own him and confess him. The public worshipping of God in Christ, in prayer, thanksgiving, praises, and sacrament, is appointed as the professing acts, by which we openly own our Lord. And therefore ordinarily the assembling ourselves together for this public worship is not to be forsaken, through negligence or fear; but with Daniel we must pray though we are sure to be cast to the lion's den. For though no duty be at all times a duty, yet the disowning of our God, or denying him, or being ashamed of him, or inordinately afraid of man, is at all times a sin. And ordinarily and seasonably to profess true godliness, our subjection and devotedness to God, is essential to external godliness.

3. Visible, expressive Godliness doth essentially consist in the practice of our fore-described covenant and profession. That our faces be truly heavenwards, and that our walk be in the way of God, though we sometimes slip and stumble, and if we step aside, that we turn not back again, but return by repentance in our way. That the drift, and aim, and bent of our lives be for God and our salvation, and that there be in us no sin, which truly and habitually we had not rather leave than keep. And that our great business in the world be the pleasing of God, and the saving of our souls. And that neither honours, nor profits, nor pleasures of the flesh, have the preeminence, and be preferred. That Christ be not put under the great ones of the world, nor put after your commodity, nor put off with the leavings of the flesh, but that all be made to stoop to him, and take his leavings. All this is of necessity to salvation, and essential to expressive godliness.

By this time, reader, thou must easily see, 1. That Godliness is not an ineffectual opinion, or dead belief. If thou

wert the most orthodox professor, or preacher in the world, thou art ungodly if thou have no more. All have not faith that say the creed. The notional apprehension, and the practical judgment are often contrary. The opinion that is insufficient to change the heart, to move the will, to renew the life, shall prove insufficient to save the soul.

2. You may see that Godliness is not the adhering to a party, though such a party as pretendeth to some special excellency, or calls itself the only church, or the purest church. It is a sin to make and cherish parties, divisions, and factions, in the universal church, and it is not godliness to sin. A godly man, through weakness, may be of a sinful party, but that is contrary to his godliness. He will worship God with his best, and be where he may have best advantage to his soul, and therefore if he can, will hold personal local communion with the best and purest congregations; but not as separating from the rest, and betaking himself to a party set against the church universal, or a party sinfully distant from others in the church universal. The grand design of the devil is, when men will needs look after religion, to make them believe that to be of such a church, or party, is to be religious, and to trust to that instead of godliness for the saving of their souls. And carnal, self-seeking teachers are the principal instruments of this deceit; who for their honour or commodity would draw away disciples after them, and make poor souls believe that they must be their followers, or of their side, or opinion, or church, if they will be saved. The Papist saith, You must follow the pope, and be of our church, or you are no true catholics, nor in the true church, and cannot be saved. And some other sects say the like of their churches. And how many thousand ungodly wretches do think to be saved, because they are of such a church or party. But the catholic, or universal church is the whole company of believers headed only by Christ; and godliness must prove thee a living member of this society, unless thou wilt be burnt with the withered branches. And God will never condemn any one that is truly godly because he is not of this sect or party, or of that. And the Papists that are the most notorious sect and grand dividers of the church, and condemners of the justified, shall know one day, that ambition was not true religion; and that the name of unity, and universality and antiquity, were unmeet

instruments to be used to the destruction of unity, and contradiction of universality and antiquity; and that God hath set apart himself the man that is godly, though the accuser of the brethren would cast such out; Psal. iv. 3. And who shall condemn when it is Christ that justifieth? Rom. viii. 33.

3. You may see now, that Godliness is not any mere external act of worship. External worship there must be, and that with all decency and reverent behaviour. But it is hypocrisy if there be nothing but the corpse without the internal godliness which is the life and soul. Bodily exercise is here by the apostle distinct from godliness.

4. You may now see that Godliness is not the mere forbearance of the outward acts or practice of any sin. For else a sleep, or a prison might make a man godly by restraining him from the acts of sin. He is ungodly that would rather live in the sin which through some restraint he doth forbear. If you would do it, you have done it, in God's account.

5. You may see also that whatsoever religiousness, obedience, or endeavours subject Christ to the flesh and world, and make him give place to them and come behind, do not deserve the name of Godliness. You are not godly, how far soever else you go, if God and your salvation take not place before all the honours, profits, and pleasures of the world. As he is not God that hath any greater, wiser, or better than himself; so that is not Godliness which giveth the precedence practically to any thing but God; that pretendeth never so highly to honour him, and yet more esteemeth their own honour with the world: or that professeth love and obedience to him, and yet loveth and obeyeth a lust before him, and sets more by love and obedience to themselves, than by their own or other men's love or obedience to God. All these are the cheating counterfeits of Godliness.

6. And if none of these be Godliness, much less doth it consist in any sin; in superstition, idolatry, or in cruelty, blood, and persecution through a carnal zeal; in a bringing all others by violence to our proud, impious wills, in murmuring, sedition, rebellion, or resisting lawful powers, under pretence of propagating religion. Godliness consisteth not in Jesuitical contrivances, and undermining others, and equivocations and pious frauds. In disturbing kingdoms, killing kings, blowing up parliaments, absolving subjects from

allegiance, and giving away the dominions of temporal lords, if they will not obey the pope in exterminating their heretics (as is decreed to be done in the Approved General Council at the Lateran under Innocent III. Can. 3.); nor doth it consist in murdering thirty thousand or forty thousand treacherously in a few weeks, as in France, or much above twice as many in Ireland; nor in butchering Christians by hundreds or thousands, as they did long ago by the Waldenses and Albigenses, and Bohemians; nor in racking and tormenting them by inquisition; nor in frying them in the flames of fagots, as in Queen Mary's days, and frequently elsewhere. This is the religion of the father of malice, that thirsts for blood, and not of the merciful Prince of Peace. Godliness is not the running to arms, and pulling down governments to set up the proud, selfconceited actors, under pretence of setting up Christ and preparing for his kingdom; snatching in their dream at crowns and kingdoms, and finding when they awake that they have caught a gallows. When the Friars had spawned the turbulent people among us in England, that thought they must do any thing, and overturn the governments of the world to make Christ the fifth monarch, and bring him from heaven to reign visibly on earth before he is willing to come, I must confess I oft thought that their cunning was much more wonderful to keep these people from being undeceived, than at first to deceive them. To keep them (in despite of all our discoveries and warnings) in such furious blindness, as to go on and do their father's work, and rage against these that told them their original, and whither they were going. The poor seduced people never read such books as Friar Campanella's "*de Regno Dei, et sacerdotio Christi*," &c. wherein he brings up all the prophetic texts in Isaiah, Daniel, &c. which these men use, laboureth to shew what a golden age is coming, in which divisions shall cease, and unity become the strength and beauty of the world, and this by the universal reign of Christ; and what a happy people the saints will be, and how they shall then judge and rule the world (and, O the comfort! the time is near), and just such words he useth for his fifth most glorious, universal monarchy, as others now do. But when all comes to all, the mystery unveiled is but this; that Christ must reign by the pope his deputy; and that all princes and

nations must submit and stoop ; and their kingdoms must all become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ, to be governed by his deputy, the pope ; and (the power falsely called spiritual, being first well settled) the other key or sword also (the temporal), must for unity sake be put into the same hand. The heavens therefore should rejoice, and the earth be glad, for the Lord thus cometh to judge the world. The fifth monarchy is at hand : the universal, holy reign of Christ, not by profane princes, but by his Holiness the Pope, and by the saints (the Friars, Jesuits, Monks, and Clergy), that shall judge the world, to whom ere long all knees shall bow.

But you will say, We are so far from joining with these Friars, that we hate the pope much more than you do. I answer, You have received their frame of doctrine of the universal fifth monarchy that is at hand. There is but one thing to do, and you are theirs ; which is, to convince you that he is not to come and reign here personally, but by his great vicegerent. And they that could bring you to believe things more improbable, may more easily bring you to them from your unreasonable conceit.

Pardon this digression ; I thought meet to tell you that Godliness lieth not in breaking the law of God, nor in obeying pride, nor being the enemies of government and order in the world, nor in an impatient striving by right or wrong, to break away from the yoke of suffering, that God for our sin (or for his cause) shall lay upon us. And now I have fully and distinctly told you, what Godliness is, and what is not.

And now go thy way, malicious soul, and say if thou dare, (as the devil's informers frequently do) that it is sedition, or faction, or schism, or disobedience, that we draw the people to under the name of Godliness. Hold on if thou wilt a little longer in such impudent calumniation against me and other ministers of Christ. But know that thy day is coming, and that for all these things thou shalt come to judgment ; and if thou justify the ungodly, yet remember, that " It is not good to have respect of persons in judgment ; and he that saith to the wicked, Thou art righteous ; the people shall curse him, nations shall abhor him ;" Prov. xxiv. 23, 24. " He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord ;" chap. xvii. 15. " Woe unto them that call evil good, and good

evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter;—which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him. Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as the dust; because they have cast away the law of the Lord of Hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel;” Isa. v. 20. 23, 24. Let the malicious serpent accuse Job before God; in the end it shall turn to his own confusion. And if any of the princes of the earth, will by dogs be provoked to destroy the priests, or by jealousy kindled by malicious whisperers, be incited to do by the servants of Christ, as they did by the Waldenses, Bohemians, and Protestants in many places, &c. we will remember the memorable words of David, 1 Sam. xxvi. 18, 19. and let the sufferers imitate him in the submissive part, “Wherefore doth my Lord pursue after his servant? For what have I done, or what evil is in my hand? Now therefore I pray thee let my Lord the King hear the words of his servant. If the Lord have stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering. But if it be the children of men, cursed be they before the Lord; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, saying, Go serve other gods.” (By going where they are served.)

Having fully shewed you what Godliness is, I now beseech thee, reader, to inquire, Whether this described case be thine? Art thou devoted to God without reserve, as being not thine own but his? And hast thou devoted all thou hast to him with thyself, to be used according to his will? Art thou more subjected to his authority, and observant of his laws and government, than of man’s? And can his word do more with thee, than the word of any mortal man, or than the violence of thy lusts and passions? Art thou heartily engaged to him as thy felicity, and dost thou give up thyself to him in filial love, dependance, and observance, as to thy dearest friend and father? Dost thou most highly esteem him, and resolvedly choose him, and sincerely seek him, preferring nothing in thy estimation, choice, resolution, or endeavour before him? Try by these and the other particulars in the description, whether you are godly or ungodly; and do it faithfully. For the day is at hand, when the ungodly

shall not stand in judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the just;" Psal. i. 5.

And besides the marks expressed in the description, let me offer you some from the plain words of the text, that you may see what God accounteth Godliness, and consequently how to judge yourselves.

1. In John iii. 3. 5, 6. it is written, "Verily, except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.—That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new;" 2 Cor. v. 17. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his;" Rom. viii. 9.

From these texts you may see, that a heart and life made new by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, is absolutely necessary to true Godliness.

2. "O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes;" Psal. cxix. 5. "To will is present with me;" Rom. vii. 18. "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none on earth, &c.;" Psal. lxxiii. 25. "The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee;" Isa. xxvi. 8.

From these and such like texts it is evident, that the principal desires of a godly man, and the choice of his will is to be what God would have him be.

3. "His delight is in the law of the Lord, and therein doth he meditate day and night;" Psal. i. 2. "As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby;" 1 Pet. ii. 2.

From these and such like texts it is manifest, That all the godly do love the word of God, as the food of their souls, and the director of their lives.

4. "Lay up for yourselves a treasure in heaven, &c. For where your treasure is, there will your hearts be also. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness;" Matt. vi. 20, 21. 33. "Enter in at the strait gate—strive to enter in—for many shall seek and shall not be able;" chap. vii. 13. Luke xxiv. "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure;" 2 Pet. i. 10.

From these and such texts you may discern, that Godliness consisteth in such diligence for salvation, as to seek it before any earthly things, and not think the labour of a holy life too much for it.

5. Rom. viii. 1. 5. 6—8. 13. Gal. v. 18, 19. Read them, and you will see that Godliness consisteth in living after the Spirit, and not after the flesh, and in mortifying the deeds of the body by the Spirit, living not by sensuality, but by faith.

6. "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light," &c. John iii. 19, 20. "And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah, by whom we may inquire of the Lord. But I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the King say so;" 1 Kings xxii. 7, 8.

From these and such like texts you see, that the godly love the discovering light, and the most certain, faithful preacher; but the ungodly cannot endure the light which sheweth them their sins, nor love the preachers that tell them their sin and misery.

7. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if you love one another;" 1 Cor. xiii. John xiii. 35. "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren;" 1 John iii. 14. "In whose eyes a vile person is contemned, but he honoureth them that fear the Lord;" Psal. xv. 4.

From these and such like texts it is evident, that all that are truly godly, have a special love to those that are godly. They love and honour Christ in his image of saints.

8. Acts ii. 42. and iv. 32. You may see, that the godly love the communion of saints, to join with them in holy doctrine, fellowship, and prayers.

9. "Pray continually;" 1 Thess. v. 17. "Christ spake a parable to them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to wax faint;" Luke xviii. 1. "Behold he prayeth;" Acts ix. 11. "I will pour out—the spirit of prayer and supplication—" Zech. xii. 10. "The Spirit helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what to pray for as we ought," &c. Rom. viii. 26.

From all these and such like it is evident, that prayer is the breath of a godly man. He is a man of prayer. When he wanteth words, he hath desires with tears or groans.

10. "This people draweth near me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me—;" Matt. xv. 8, 9. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth;" John iv. 23, 24.

From such texts it is evident, that every godly man doth make the inward exercise of his soul the principal part of his worship unto God, and doth not stick in bodily exercise, or lip service.

11. "As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord;" Josh. xxiv. 15. So Deut. vi. and xi. and 1 Pet. ii. 17, 18. and iii. 10. and Eph. v. and vi.

From many such texts it is evident, that godly men desire the sanctification of others, and make conscience of the duties of their relations, and would have their households or friends to serve the Lord as well as they.

12. Luke xiv. 26. 33. xviii. 22. Matt. x. 37. Rom. viii. 17, 18.

From these and other texts it is evident, that all things are below Christ and heaven in the practical esteem of a godly man, and that he will forsake them all rather than he will forsake him. All these are Scripture marks of Godliness.

Having hastily run over these things to help you in the trial, I will add some directions to help you in the practice, and therein yet more fully to acquaint you, Wherein true Godliness doth consist.

Briefly to lay down before you first the mere enumeration of the chief points wherein sound Godliness doth consist, to help your memories, while you see them close together. 1. Sound Godliness consisteth in a solid understanding of the substantial points of religion. 2. In a sound belief of the truth of God's word, and the reality of the unseen things. 3. In an adhering to the holy Scriptures as the divine rule of faith and life. 4. In the love of God in Jesus Christ, excited by the belief of his love revealed by Jesus Christ. 5. In true humility, and low thoughts of ourselves, and low expectation from others. 6. In a heavenly mind that most regardeth the things above, and seeketh them as our only felicity at home. 7. In self-denial, and mortification, and temperance, and victory over the desires of the flesh. When we can deny our own conceits, and interests, and wills for

God ; and are dead to the world, and are not servants to our fleshly appetites or senses, or to the things below. 8. In thankfulness for received mercies, and praising the glorious name of God. 9. In the willing and diligent use of the means that God hath appointed us for salvation. 10. In charity or love to all men, even our enemies ; and a special love to true believers. 11. In a love to the holy communion of saints, especially in public worship. 12. In a tender desire of the unity of the saints, and their concord and increase of charity ; and a trouble at their discord and divisions. 13. In dealing justly in our places with all men, and carefully avoiding all that may be injurious to any. 14. In studying to do all the good we can, and doing it to our power ; especially to the household of faith. 15. In a conscientious discharge of the duties of our relations, as rulers, teachers, parents, masters, subjects, and inferiors. 16. In watchfulness against temptations, and avoiding occasions of sin. 17. In serious preparations for sufferings and death, and patient bearing them when they come. These are the things that Godliness doth consist in.

And now out of all I will draw up ten practical directions, which in a special manner I would entreat you to practise, if you would be solidly godly, and not be deceived with names or counterfeits.

Direct. 1. Be sure to live upon the substantials of religion, and let them receive no detriment by a pretence of zeal for lesser points : lay not your religion in uneffectual opinions ; and let lower truths and duties keep their places, and not be set above the higher.

Direct. 2. See that your religion be principally seated in the heart. Understand it as well as you can (lest it be taken from you) ; but never think it is savingly your own while it is but in the brain. So much you believe indeed as you love, and as hath imprinted the image of God upon your hearts. Ever see that your wills be resolved for God and holiness ; and that you be able truly to say, I would be perfect ; and I would fain be better than I am.

Direct. 3. Be sure you take up with God alone, as your whole felicity, and think not that there is a necessity of the approbation of men, or of liberty, plenty, life, or any thing besides God. Do not only think that there is a God, and a life of glory for you, but live upon them, and be moved

and actuated by them; trust to them, and take them for your part. Live by faith, and not by sight.

Direct. 4. Live daily upon Christ as the only Mediator, without whom we have no access to God, acceptance with him, or receivings from him. Look for all that you have from God to come by him; live on him for reconciliation, for teaching, for preservation, for communication, for consolation, and for salvation. Let Christ make your thoughts of God more familiar, as now reconciled and condescending to us.

Direct. 5. Obey the sanctifying motions of the Spirit: and if you have disobeyed, repent; not despairing, but returning to obedience; but see that you live not in any known sin, which a sanctified will can enable you to avoid. Resist sins of passion; but most carefully take heed of sins of interest, deliberately chosen, and kept up as necessary or good.

Direct. 6. Make it the principal work of your religion and your lives, to inflame your hearts with the love of God, as he is presented amiable in his wonderful grace in Jesus Christ. Strive no further to affect your hearts with fears or griefs, or other troubling passions, than as tendeth to the work of love, or is a just expression of it. Go daily to promises, and mercies, and Christ, and heaven, of purpose for fuel to kindle love: be much therefore in thankfulness and praise, which are works of love. All goeth on sweetly, and easily, and acceptably that is carried on by love. That is the best soul, and most like to God, that hath most of love to God and godliness. And that is the best service, and most like to the work of heaven, that hath most of love. Let the principal striving and pleading with your hearts be to kindle love; and your principal complaints, for the want of it.

Direct. 7. Keep up charity to all, even unto enemies; and special love to all the godly. And therefore hate backbiting and slandering, and making the worst of other men's actions: take them as thieves that come to rob you of your charity. He that speaks evil of another, persuadeth you so far to hate him, (unless it be in charity, persuading you to seek his cure.) Hear the reproacher and backbiter understandingly, as if he said in words, as he doth in sense, 'I pray you hate such a man, or abate your love to him.' As

the way to cause love is to represent the object lovely, which doth much more than command me to love it; so the way to cause hatred, is to represent the object hateful or unlovely, which is more than to bid us hate our brother. And he that hateth his brother is a manslayer; and none such have eternal life abiding in them. Away therefore with those volumes of learned slanders and reproaches, begotten betwixt uncharitableness and self-love, (or pride;) and take them as the devil's books, that are written to draw thee to hate thy brother. Frown also upon the censorious: take heed also of divisions and parties, because they are enemies to universal love, and are but imposthumes or boils of the church, where zeal and love are diseasedly drawn into a narrow compass; and that is appropriated to a few, that should be common to all believers. Cherish meekness and patience, and reject all that carnal zeal or envy, contention and animosities, which are contrary to love. Read and study well the third chapter of St. James, and the epistle of St. John.

Direct. 8. Understand the preciousness and use of time. Love diligence the better, because it is a redeeming of time; a doing much in a little time. Hate that which would rob you of so precious a commodity.

Direct. 9. See that there be no predominant selfishness or worldly interest unmortified at the heart. Study duty, and do it faithfully, and trust God with life, estate, and events; and shift not for yourselves by sinful means.

Direct. 10. Maintain your authority over your sense and fleshly appetites. Captivate not reason to the brutish part; especially under pretence of liberty. Use your bodies as may strengthen them, and best fit them for the work of God: let them have so much delight in things allowed as conduceth to this; but take heed of making the delights of flesh and sense your end, or allowing yourselves in an unprofitable pleasing of your enemy; or of corrupting your minds, and relishing too much sweetness in the things of the flesh, and losing your relish of spiritual things. Set not the bait too near you: keep the gunpowder from the fire. He that believeth that if ever he be damned, it will be for pleasing his flesh before God, and if ever he be saved, he must be first and principally saved from the inordinate pleasures of the flesh,

will not be so forward as brutish infidels are, to seek out for delights, and plead for all that pleaseth them as harmless.

Having thus in the introduction shewed you what Godliness is, and how it may be known, and what you must do to be soundly and sincerely godly, I hope you are prepared for the following discourse, of the Certain Necessity and Excellency of Godliness, which tends to fetch over the delaying, resisting, unresolved wills, of those that are yet in the BRUTISH state, and are strangers to the dispositions, employments, desires, hopes, and joys of true believers. The Lord concur effectually with his blessing. Amen.

LUKE x. 41, 42.

And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her.

IN order to the decision of the great controversy practically managed through the world, Whether Godliness or Worldliness and Sensuality be better? I have already performed the first part of my task, in proving the certainty of the principles of Godliness and of Christianity; which of itself will infer the conclusion, which I undertake to prove, that the reasons for Godliness are so sure, and clear, and great, that every one must be A SAINT OR A BRUTE. He that will not choose a life of HOLINESS, hath no other to fall into but a life of SENSUALITY. Either the superior faculties proper to a rational nature must be predominant; and then we can be no less than SAINTS: or else the inferior, brutish faculties will be predominant; and then, (though from your natural powers you are called MEN, yet) if you may be denominated from your intended END and from the USE of your faculties in order to that END, you are but an ingenious kind of BRUTES; exceeding apes and monkies in the cunning contrivance of your unhappy designs, but incomparably worse in your successes; because you were indeed intrusted with the noble faculties and gifts of MEN, while you

captivated them unto your appetites and sense, and lived but to the END OF BEASTS.

The second thing that I have to do, for the conquering all opposition to this conclusion, is to prove the NECESSITY of HOLINESS, which (being now to speak to such as profess to believe the Holy Scriptures,) I may easily do from this plain and pregnant text. To which I shall annex such cogent REASONS as may silence those that will not acquiesce in the authority of the holy word.

So great is the difference between a dreaming opinion in religion, (called a dead faith,) and a serious, hearty, practical belief, that if they that say (and do but say) they believe the Holy Scriptures, and yet are ungodly, had soundly believed, considered, and digested this very text, it would have made such a change both in their hearts and lives, as would have told them by happy experience, that the Gospel is not a dead letter, nor saving faith a lifeless, ineffectual thing; and that God sent not his Son into the world only to be complimented with, and reverently treated with a few good words; nor his Gospel and ministers merely to be entertained with a demure, silent, and respectful audience; nor hath proposed his kingdom to be merely the matter of commendation or discourse. But that as man is a creature of a noble and capacious nature, so he hath a high and noble end, and consequently the highest employment for his reason; and that religion is the most NECESSARY and must be the most SERIOUS business in the world. Did they believe this text, as verily they pretend to believe the Gospel, it would help to the recovery of the understandings of the ambitious, and make the proud ashamed of their glory, and settle the drunken, aspiring minds of those that think it worth more than their salvation, to sit upon the highest perch. It would call off the covetous worldling his immoderate seeking provisions for the flesh, and save them that are drowned in the cares of this life, by shewing them the true and necessary treasure. It would spare them many a vexatious thought, and a great deal of unnecessary labour, and prevent the shame and horror that must befall them, when in the end they find their labour lost, and all their expectations frustrated. It would quickly stop the mouths which prejudice, ignorance, malignity, enmity and deliration have opened against a life of faith and serious godliness; and

cause them that scorn it as a needless thing, to make it their daily business and delight. It would tell the sluggish, senseless sinner, that he hath work of everlasting consequence upon his hand, and that it is no time to dream or loiter : and it would tell the brutish sensualist that there are more sweet and durable delights ; and the time-wasting fool that time is precious, and he hath none to spare and cast away, having so great a work to do. It would set men on seeking with greatest diligence, the kingdom which before they did but dream of ; and would turn the very stream of their hearts and lives on that which before they minded but as on the by. In a word, it would make the earthly to become heavenly, and the fleshly spiritual, and the slothful to be diligent, and rotten-hearted sinners to become renewed saints, as all must do that ever will be saved. And if these words of Christ be not thus received by you, and work not such wonders on men's hearts, it is not because there is any want of fitness in the text, but because men's hearts are hardened into a wilful contempt of the most precious truths, which in themselves are apt to change and save them.

Of all ways of teaching, history is accounted one of the most effectual ; because it hath the greatest advantage on our apprehensions, as setting our lesson before our eyes in the great character of example, and not only in the smaller letter of a naked precept. And of all history, what can be more powerful, than, 1. Where one of the actors is the eternal Son of God ; and that not above our reach in heaven, but here in our flesh, on the stage of this sublunary world ? 2. And the other actors are such as most fitly represent the different actions of all the world, at least that live within the sound of the Gospel ; and lay open the great question about which the world is so much divided. 3. And when the matter itself is of the greatest consequence that can be imagined ; even concerning the present choice and resolution of our hearts, and that expending of our time, and that business and employment of our lives, on which our endless life dependeth. All this you have here set out even to the life, before your eyes, in the glass of this example in my text : and the Lord of life doth call you all to see your faces in it ; and here plainly sheweth you what will be expected from you ; and what you must be, and do, and trust to ; and this not in any long and tedious discourse, that might overwhelm

your memories, or weary your attentions ; but in very brief, though full expressions.

As Jesus entered into Bethany, Martha (who it seems was the owner of the house) received and entertained him. No doubt but a great company followed Jesus ; or his disciples, that ordinarily accompanied him, at least. Martha thinks that having entertained such a guest, it were a great neglect, if she should not provide for him and for his followers ; and therefore she is busy in doing what she can ; but the number is so great, that she is oppressed with the care and trouble, and findeth that she hath more to do than she is able : her sister, that she thought should have helped her in such a case, is sitting with the disciples at the feet of Christ, to hear his word. Martha seeing this, is offended at her sister, and seems to think that Christ himself is too neglective of her, or partial for her sister ; and therefore thus pleads her cause with Christ, “ Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone ? Bid her therefore that she help me.” As if she had said, ‘ Is it a fit thing that both thyself and all this company should be unprovided for, and have neither meat nor drink ? Or is it fit that all should be laid on me, even more than I can do, while she sits hearing with the disciples ? Deal equally and mercifully, and bid her help me.’ And indeed most people would think that this was but a reasonable motion, and that when Christ was made the judge between them, he should have decided the case on Martha’s side ; but he did not so : But,

1. Instead of commending Martha for her care and diligence, he sheweth her error, by a gentle, but yet a close reproof : “ Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things.”
2. Instead of reproving Mary for negligence of her duty in the house, he highly commendeth her for the seasonable doing of a greater work : “ Mary hath chosen the good part.”
3. He groundeth the reason of his judgment on the different nature and use of their employments : “ One thing is needful ;” in comparison of which, the rest were all unnecessary things, and such as then might have been neglected.
4. And so he passeth sentence on Mary’s side, that the good part which she hath chosen, “ shall not be taken away from her :” in which he not only answereth Martha with an express denial, as if he should say, ‘ I will not take off Mary from the work which she hath chosen ;’

but also on that occasion doth point out the durable nature of the good which she had chosen, and promise the continuance of it.

Concerning Martha, some expositors run into two extremes. Some think that she was an unregenerate worldling, and savoured only fleshly things, and that these words of Christ describe her state as one that had not yet made choice of the one thing needful, and the better part. But it is only her present action that Christ doth reprehend and censure, and not her state. Her entertainment of Christ, and speeches to him, and other passages, give us great probability that she was a true disciple, as after it is said that Jesus loved her; John xi. 5.

On the other side, one learned annotator thus paraphraseth the words of Christ to Martha, 'Thou takest a great deal of unnecessary, though not culpable pains;' as if Christ's words were no reprehension of her, nor her course blameworthy.

But the plain truth lieth between these two extremes. Martha, though most probably a true disciple, was here to blame, in preferring a lesser duty before a greater, and doing that unseasonably, which in due time was to be done, and in neglecting an opportunity for the hearing of Christ's word, which Mary took. It was not only blameless, but a duty in itself to make provision for Christ and his attendants; but she should have been hearing first while he was preaching, and taken that opportunity for the benefit of her soul. It was no ordinary preacher that was come under her roof: his stay was not like to be long: his doctrine concerned her salvation: she knew not whether ever she should have the like opportunity again; and therefore she should have rather stayed for his own direction, when to go make provision for their bodies, than to have omitted the hearing of his word.

But you will ask perhaps, 'When a sermon and other worldly business fall out at once, are we always bound to hear the sermon?'

I answer, no, not always; for else in great cities that have frequent preaching, you should do nothing else but hear. We have a body as well as a soul, and must have meet employment for both; and must make due provision for both; and must be serviceable to the bodily welfare of others, and to the common good. Our bodily labour and temporal em-

ployment must be conscionably followed, as well as our spiritual; for God hath determined that "in the sweat of our faces we shall eat our bread;" Gen. iii. 19. And even in innocency Adam was put into the garden to dress or till and keep it; Gen. ii. 15. With quietness we must "labour and eat our own bread; and if any will not work, neither should he eat;" 2 Thess. iii. 10. 12. See Paul's example, "Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you;" 2 Thess. v. 8. We must "labour, working with our hands, that we may have to give to him that needeth;" Ephes. iv. 28. And if our bodies have not competent employment, they will grow such rusty, unfit instruments for the soul to work by, that when melancholy or other diseases have disabled them, the soul itself will have the loss; and he that will do nothing but hear, and pray, and meditate, is likely shortly to be scarce able to pray and meditate at all, (unless it be one of a very strong and healthful constitution).

No one therefore from this determination of Christ to Martha, is to be driven from their lawful calling into a contrary extreme. But this was not the case between Mary and Martha: it was a special opportunity which then was to be taken. We must first seek God's kingdom, and its righteousness, and prudently take such opportunities for our souls as we can, without omitting greater duties, and as our case requireth; not taking as much food as we can ingest, but as much as we can digest: it is possible to eat too much, but not to digest too well. A Christian must have prudence when two duties come together, to know which at that present time is the greatest, and to be preferred; which dependeth much on the necessity, and the ends; the good that will follow the doing of them, and the hurt that will follow the omission. And without this prudential discerning of time and duty, we shall never order our conversations right, but shall live in a continual sin when we are doing that, which in its own nature and season is our duty.

A poor man may not read and hear so frequently as a rich (ordinarily); nor a servant as the master; because there would greater evils follow the omission of their common labour at that time.

Thus much being said for the explication of the text,

there is no more necessary but what will fall in most conveniently with the matter. The sense is, as if Christ should have said, 'Martha, Martha, I know thou dost all this in love to me, and meanest well in it; and it is no more than what is thy duty in its proper season; but O! what is the food that perisheth in comparison of that which endureth to everlasting life! It is my meat and drink to do the will of him that sent me, in feeding and in saving souls. Thou hadst now an opportunity to hear my word, the word of the Son of God, thy Saviour, and thereby to have promoted thy everlasting happiness, as Mary doth; and this should have been preferred even before this provision for our bodies; and if for this thou hadst now omitted thy care and labour about meat and drink, I would not at all have been offended with thee: thou hadst thy choice, and Mary had her choice; thou hast chosen care and trouble about many things, and made thyself a great deal ado; but Mary hath chosen that one thing that was necessary, which is the better part, and therefore it shall not be taken from her, but she shall possess the benefit of her choice.'

Where note, for the fuller understanding of it, the true opposition between the case of Mary and Martha.

1. As to the matter; Martha had many things in hand, a multifarious care and trouble; but Mary had but one.

2. As to the manner and effects of their employments; Martha was full of care and troubles, distracted or disturbed by the cumbrance of her businesses; but Mary was quietly hearing and learning how to be free from care and trouble, and how to attain everlasting rest.

3. As to the quality of their business; Martha's was of less necessity or concernment, though good and honest in its place; but Mary's was about the thing of absolute necessity.

Also Martha's was good in its season, but a lesser good; but Mary's was that good part, which containeth all other good or referreth to it, and therefore was to be preferred.

4. And therefore as to the continuance; Mary's being a more eligible employment, and about an everlasting treasure, shall not be taken from her, when the fruit of Martha's employment will quickly have an end.

Yet in these different cases, each one had her choice; had Martha chosen better, she had had better. And the choice much proceeded from the judgment and disposition:

Had she judged better, and been inclined better, Martha would have chosen better.

Before we come to the principal Doctrines, we may profitably note these observations by the way :

1. Note here, that the nearest natural relations (as brothers and sisters, yea, parents and children) are not always of one mind or way in the matters of their salvation. Greater difference may be between them, than this between Martha and Mary in the text. They may rise up against each other, and seek each others' lives, as Christ foretold, Mark xiii. 12. And therefore father, mother, brother, sister, and all are to be denied for Christ (that I say not hated, as Christ saith, Luke xiv. 26.) when they stand in opposition to him. The same parentage and education made not Esau and Jacob of a disposition, or of one mind or way ; nor Isaac and Ishmael ; nor Shem and Ham ; nor would restrain Cain, the first man born into the world, from cruelly murdering his brother, upon a difference about their religions, caused by his own ungodly mind ; even because his " own works were evil, and his brother's righteous and acceptable to God ;" 1 John iii. 12. And therefore parents must patiently submit (having done their duty), if even the children of their bodies should prove reprobates. And brothers and sisters must submit, if these in so near a relation be castaways. God hath not promised that all our kindred shall be saved. Rejoice that you are not yourselves forsaken ; and be glad that any and so many are sanctified, though further from you in the flesh ; and love them in their more excellent relation to Christ and you.

2. Note here, how our Lord doth spend his time in the place and company where he is. When he entereth into a house, he is presently at work in teaching poor souls the way to God ; or else how could Mary have been employed in hearing him ? In our places and measure we should imitate him in this. Can you come into any house or company and find nothing to say or do for God ? Are there none wiser than yourselves that you may learn of, as Mary did of Christ ? Nor none more ignorant whom charity requireth you to teach ? Nor none that need a quickening word, to mind them of their everlasting state ? As soon as worldly, or vain ungodly people get together, they are presently upon some

worldly, or vain discourse. And if you be indeed a heavenly and spiritual people, should you not be more ready when you come together, for heavenly, spiritual discourse? Have you not a thousandfold more to set your tongues on work? The necessities of the hearers, the hopes of doing good, the presence of God, the sense of the duty, the sweetness of the subject, the avoiding of sin, and the blessing of God's acceptance to yourselves? O had we but the skill, and will, and diligence, that this interlocutory preaching by holy conference doth require, what a supply-party would it be for the promoting of men's salvation, where the more public preaching of the Gospel is wanting? Who can forbid us by familiar discourse to exercise our charity, in minding poor, regardless sinners of the life to come? and exhorting them to due preparation and repentance? and to open to them the riches of Christ, and set forth his love, and draw them to embrace him?

3. Note here, how carefully we should take the present opportunities of our souls, to hear and learn as Mary did. She stands not cavilling like our full-stomach hearers, that ask, How can you prove that I am bound to hear such a lecture, or to come to church and hear a sermon twice on the Lord's day, or to come to the minister to ask advice, or be instructed by him? No more than a hungry man will ask, How prove you that it is my duty to eat every day? Or than a sick man will say, How prove you that I am bound to seek to the physician, to go or send to his house, and to look after him? As there is much in the very new nature, and health, and relish of a gracious soul, to decide such controversies as these without any subtlety of argument, so a Christian's prudence and care of his salvation will tell him, that when Christ hath a voice to speak to him, it beseemeth him to have an ear to hear; and that the sermon telleth the hearer the season of his duty, and the offer of a mercy telleth when it is our duty to accept it, without any other more particular obligation; unless when we can truly say as before God, that some duty that at that time is greater, hindereth us. These are easy questions to those that savour the things of the Spirit. When Christ is speaking, Mary will be hearing; and lesser things shall not call her off.

If any shall say, 'So would we too, if we could hear Christ,' I answer, Remember that he never intended to

abide himself on earth, and teach his church personally by his own mouth ; but hath appointed messengers and officers to proclaim his law unto the world, and tender them his grace, and saith, “ He that heareth you heareth me ; and he that despiseth you despiseth me ” (Luke x. 16.), and he that “ despiseth, despiseth not man but God ; ” 1 Thess. iv. 8. And he that will not now believe and hear Christ speaking by his ministers, when he is acknowledged to be the Son of God, and his sealed word hath had so long possession in the world, would hardly have regarded Christ himself in a time when he appeared in the form of a servant, and was found in fashion as a man, and was believed on but by a few persons then counted but inconsiderable.

4. Note also, the humility and teachableness of disciples in those times, who were wont to sit learning at their teacher’s feet. Which was then an ordinary case, and not of Christ’s disciples only. Paul was brought up “ at the feet of Gamaliel ; ” Acts xxii. 3. Not like the proud and self-conceited part of our hearers in these times, that come to hear somewhat for their malicious or contentious minds to quarrel with, and expect that their teachers tell them nothing but what is agreeable to their own conceits, and think us to be injurious to them, if we would heal their ignorance or impiety, and make them any wiser or better than they are ; and that reproach us and set themselves against us as their enemies, if we will not be ruled by them, and humour them in all our administrations, as if we were the patients and they the physicians, we the learners and they the teachers, yea, we their servants, and they our guides and rulers in the matters of our own office.

But let us come closer to the words themselves, and consider of the instructions which they afford us. Which are these.

Doct. I. It is but one thing that is of absolute necessity, but it is many things that those are taken up with, that neglect that one.

Doct. II. The one thing needful leadeth to content ; but the many things of the world do trouble, and disquiet, and distract the soul.

Doct. III. All men where the Gospel is preached, have their choice whether they will seek and have the one thing

necessary, or trouble and distract themselves with the many things that are unnecessary.

Doct. IV. They that choose the one thing necessary, do choose the good part; and they that choose any other, do make an evil and unhappy choice.

Doct. V. The one thing needful shall not be taken from them that choose it; but they that choose it not, shall have no better than they choose.

Doct. VI. Those that make the bad unhappy choice, are apt to grudge at them that choose better, and will not think and do as they.

Doct. VII. When the matter is brought before the Lord Jesus Christ, he will not take part with those that murmur at his servant's choice, and speak against them; but will commend their choice, and condemn the contrary.

All this you see lie plain here in the text, and it is all worthy our larger consideration. But the *first* is like to hold me so long, that to avoid prolixity, the rest shall be but touched under that.

Doct. I. One thing is needful. It is one thing only that is absolutely necessary; but many things that men busy themselves about, that neglect this one.

In handling this, I must shew you,

I. In what respect it is that this needful thing is said to be but one.

II. How it is that the troublesome matters of the world are called many.

III. Whereto and how far this one thing is necessary.

IV. Whether the rest are indeed unnecessary.

V. I shall assist you in the application of it to yourselves, that it may reach the end to which I do intend it.

I. In what respect is the needful thing but one?

Which will be the easier understood, when you know what the one thing needful is. And it is, most directly, that which is our end, To be saved, and to please the Lord, or to glorify God and enjoy him in glory for ever. Which comprehendeth or implieth the necessary means.

And this blessed state is one, considered, 1. Objectively. It is one God that we have to please, and to behold, and love, and praise for ever. 2. It is one formally; that is, It is only the soul's fruition of this one God that is our end

and blessedness. And thus the end being principally meant, it is said that one thing is necessary; though the means may be more than one that are necessary to obtain it.

And yet even with respect unto the means, it may be said that one thing is necessary, by a general, comprehensive speech, as one containeth many parts. As to cure a sickness may be said to be the one thing needful to preserve a man's life; when yet that cure must be done by many acts and means. The means are but one thing as denominated from their end; even our everlasting happiness. And they are but one as denominated from their original, they being all but the will of God revealed in his word for man's direction to salvation. And they are all one in the principal stock that proceedeth from this original or root; and that is, the Lord Jesus Christ himself, who is therefore eminently called 'the way;' because there is no other way or means, but what standeth in a due subordination to the Redeemer as the chief means, as well as to the pure Godhead as the end.

Also as all the means of God's appointment have a union of nature or similitude with the end. And as God's image is one in all his children, so is it, in their kind and measure, in all his ordinances and means. They also in their kind and place are partakers of the Divine nature. The name of God is as it were written upon them, and his blessed nature legible in them.

Also the means are all but one, as all are parts of one holy frame, which most harmoniously concur to the doing of one work: as all the wheels and other parts are but one coach which carryeth us to our journey's end. As Christ and his church are one body (1 Cor. xii. 12.), so Christ and all subordinate means for the recovery and salvation of his own, are one kingdom of God, and one way to the Father, and one salvation; I shall more fully open it under the next head.

And now for the negative, you may discern by what is said, 1. That here is no such unity as even in the end must confound God and man, or his glory and our salvation.

2. Nor is here any such unity as doth confound the end and means; no, not the Godhead with the manhood of the Redeemer, much less with the inferior kind of beings.

3. Nor is there any such unity as doth confound all the means among themselves. and make all one; or exclude the rest by exalting one; but rather each one doth suppose the

rest to constitute the perfect frame. Christ doth not exclude faith, nor faith exclude repentance; nor faith and repentance exclude obedience; nor doth the office of one of these exclude the use and office of the rest. Public duties exclude not private, nor do private exclude public. One part excludeth not another. Reading excludeth not preaching, nor both of them praying; but their nature and use bespeaketh a conjunction. The whole body is not an eye or hand; nor doth the unity exclude but include even the smallest members.

4. Nor is there such a unity as excludeth difference of degrees. For one means may be more necessary and excellent than another. And the same person by growing doth differ from himself as he was before; and one will hereafter excel another in glory, as they do in holiness and faithful improvement of their talents.

II. Let us next lay both together, and see how the troubling matters of the world are called 'many' in opposition to this one.

And 1. Every creature to a sensual man, is made by him in some sort his end and god. For he doth not use it only, and refer it as the godly do, to an end that is one; but he would enjoy it and make it objectively his end itself, and so idolize it. And therefore though in the general notion of delight they all agree; yet materially, what abundance of ends and gods have carnal men? Every sense must have its own delight! The eye must have its delight, and the appetite its delight; and so of the rest.

2. And also these fleshly baits and pleasures are discordant even among themselves. They draw the sinner several ways; and one of them fighteth against the other. The riches of the sensualist do usually contradict his ease; and often his voluptuous humour; and his ambition and pride doth bridle his disgraceful lusts; and one sin will not let another have its end, but robbeth him of the poor expected fruit. And thus they do distract the sinners, and tear their very hearts in pieces; and divide and dismember them, where God would heal them and unite them in himself. And the toilsome cares and labours by which these things must be obtained, are many, and oft contrary to each other; and a great deal of stir it is that a deluded sinner makes to little purpose.

The sun then of both these heads is this. The matter of a Christian's faith, and religion, desire, hope, and love, is therefore called one thing, because God who is one, is the sum of all. It is but one sun, though it hath many beams, and all those beams are nothing but the emanations of the sun; and have nothing but what they have from it. God is all to the religion and soul of a true believer; and therefore all to him is one. Creatures, and duties, and ordinances, which are many, are all but one to him in God. His faith beholdeth them, and his affections relish them, as united all in God. 1. As their spring from whom they flow. 2. And as the life by whom they are all animated; and as the matter and sense which they signify and import. 3. And as their end to which they tend, and in which they all terminate and agree.

Many branches are but one tree, and have one stock; and many members are one body, because they are animated with one soul. Many letters, syllables, and words may make one sentence; and many leaves may make one book, and treat but of one subject. Many actions of a ploughman are called ploughing, and of a weaver, weaving, &c. as being all united in one end. I know these similes have their dissimilitude, but this is the sum; that It is God that the believer seeth, and seeketh, and loveth, and converseth with, and intendeth in all the ordinances of grace, in all his duties, and in all the creatures; and in God they are united, and one thing to him. He hath nothing to do at church, or at home, in private or public, but live to God, and seek after the everlasting enjoyment of him. If weakness and temptation put any other business into his hands, he is so far stepped out of the Christian way. In his very common labours and mercies (so far as he is holy), God is to him, the spring, the life, the sweetness, the beauty, the strength, the meaning, and the end of all, and therefore all in all.

But the creatures in the hands and use of the ungodly, or of the godly, so far as they use them sinfully, have no such unity. Though in themselves they so depend on God, that none can make a separation, nor can they at all exist without him; yet in the sense, estimation, ends, and use of the ungodly, the creatures are separated from God, and are as branches cut off from the tree; and departing from God, these men are gone from unity, and are lost, distracted and

confounded in the multitude of the creatures; and will never have unity till they return to God.

III. In the next place let us consider, What is the necessity that is here spoken of, and how far this one thing is necessary to us.

And 1. One thing is necessary morally, for itself, which is our ultimate end. When other things are necessary but for that.

2. Comprehensively of the means we may say, that one thing, that is, sanctification, is necessary to the pleasing of God; which is to be regarded, 1. As the end of obedience, and 2. As the end of love; by the obedient soul in way of duty; and by the loving soul devoted to God, as its delight.

The world hath many contrary masters, and therefore hath many things to do to please them; and when they have done their best, they cannot please them all, but may leave more displeased than they please. For those that they must please, expect impossibilities; and many a single person perhaps may look for as much as you can give to all. And they have such contrary interests, which you must humour, that the same things that one expects to please him, will vehemently displease another; and perhaps the more displease the other, because it is pleasing to that one.

And ourselves have our contrarieties in ourselves, and are as hard to be pleased by others or ourselves. We have our sensual desires which are unreasonable and inordinate, unseasonable and importunate, and will take no nay. A sensual, covetous, ambitious fancy, is a bottomless vessel: your pouring in doth no whit fill it. It is a devouring gulf; a consuming (that I say not an unquenchable) fire. Like the horseleech it crieth, Give, give, and the more you give, the more it craveth, and is never less satisfied than when it hath glutted itself with that from which it seeketh satisfaction.

But God is one, and with this one thing is he pleased; even with a holy heart and life. He hath no contradictory interests or assertions; and therefore hath no contradictory commands; that which must please him, must be suitable to his blessed nature. He is infinite in wisdom, and therefore hath no pleasure in fools, that bring him sacrifice, and refuse obedience, and “know not that they do evil;” Eccles. v. 1. And have not the wit to know what they do, and

whom they speak to ; and to know that which only is worth the knowing. How often do we read him rejecting the sacrifice of the wicked, and casting their most costly offerings in their faces, as things that he abhorreth, when they come to him without that humble, loving, and obedient heart, which he requireth ! “ Their oblations are vain, the multitude of their sacrifice is to no purpose, and incense is an abomination to him ; their feasts and sabbaths his soul hateth, they are a trouble to him, he cannot bear them ” (Psal. l. 8. &c. Isa. i. 11, 12—20.), if they come without the “ one thing necessary.” Without this he careth not for their fastings, or formalities ; Isa. lviii. 5. It is not “ thousands of rams, or ten thousand rivers of oil, nor the fruit of their body, if they would give it for the sin of their soul,” that he will accept. “ But he hath shewed thee, O man, what is good. And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God ? ” Mich. vi. 7, 8. The conclusion of the whole matter is this : “ Fear God, and keep his commandments ; for this is the whole duty of man ; ” Eccles. xii. 13.

You are never the better beloved of God for being rich, or honourable in the world, nor yet because you are poor, or in a mean condition, nor because you are sick or well, weak or strong, comely or uncomely ; but because you love him through his Son, and “ believe in him whom the Father hath sent ; ” John xvi. 27. “ Without faith it is impossible to please God ; ” Heb. xi. 6. The “ new man must be put on, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him, where there is neither Greek, nor Jew, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all in all ; ” Col. iii. 10, 11. “ For in Christ Jesus circumcision availeth nothing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature, and faith that works by love, and the keeping of the commands of God ; ” Gal. v. 6. vi. 15. 1 Cor. vii. 19.

This one thing (“ even Godliness which is profitable to all things) is necessary in us, (supposing the necessities in Christ) to render us acceptable to the holy God. And without this all the accomplishments imaginable will make us but as “ sounding brass, or as a tinkling cymbal ; ” 1 Cor. xiii. 1.

3. One thing is needful to the saving of our souls ; without which all things else are vain. There are many ways to

hell; but to heaven there is but one. There are a thousand ways to delude and blind a soul, but only one for its true and saving illumination. Erroneous sectaries are blinded in some particular points, by the seducing words of men. And ungodly sensualists are blinded in the main, and damnably err from the necessary, practical doctrines of salvation, being deceived by the inclination of their own concupiscence. Errors are multifarious, and abound even in many that inveigh most fiercely against the erroneous. But truth is simple. We have one Teacher to instruct us, one Spirit to enlighten us, one word of God to be our rule, one light to guide us through all the darkness and mazes of the world, and recover our deluded, darkened minds. Thousands are ready to draw us away from God. Temptations lie thick on every hand. Within us, and without us; before us, and on each side. Which way can you look or go, but you will meet with baits and snares. And if Eve be once deceived, Adam is the more easily overcome. When the appetite and senses are ensnared by their objects, and imagination corrupted, the understanding is in danger of deceit. You may go into a hospital, and see a variety of diseases; but health is one and the same. One hath the pestilence, and another hath the leprosy, and another a palsy, and another is distracted; but among a thousand people in health, you see no such difference. Health only is formally the cure of all.

What abundance of miserable sinners be in the world, that are almost at hell already? But only one sort of men, even the regenerate, are rescued by grace, and shall be saved from it. Many inventions have men found out for their destruction; but there is no way but by Christ, through faith and holiness, to their salvation. Set as light by Christ and holiness as you will, and deride it as foolishly and perversely as you please, you will find at last, that this way or none must bring you to heaven. Either ignorance, or pride, or covetousness, or malice, or gluttony, or voluptuousness, or lust, or any one sin of a hundred may be your ruin. But there is only one salve to heal these sores; and only one cordial or antidote that can expel these several sorts of poison from your hearts. "Godliness is profitable to all things;" 1 Tim. iv. 8.

Drudge for the world as long as you will, and gape after honour, and applause from men, and try a thousand ways for

your content ; but when you have all done, you must return by sound repentance into the way of holiness, or you are lost for ever. When you have slighted grace, you must give up yourselves to the power of that grace. When you have set light by a life of holy love to God, and the fruition of him in glory, you must make it your treasure and delight, and your hearts must be upon it, or you are undone ; Matt. vi. 21. When you have made a jest of a holy life, you must come about, and take yourselves that course that you jested at, though you be as much jested at by others ; yea, and make it the principal business of your lives, or perish in hell under the vengeance of the Almighty, whose justice you provoked, and whose mercy you neglected. Choose you whether, but one of them will be your part. Even as Saul, that was “ exceeding mad against believers, and persecuted them even to strange cities ” (Acts xxv. 10, 11.), was glad to become one of them himself, though he suffered as much as he had caused them to suffer ; and accounted it the greatest mercy of his life, that God vouchsafed him such a change, whatever it cost him.

IV. *Quest.* ‘ But is nothing necessary but this one ? Are not other things also needful in their places ? ’

Ans. I told you that other things are not other, so far as they stand in due subordination to this one, or are the parts of it. He that saith to a sick man, ‘ You would do well if you had such a skilful man for your physician,’ doth not by these words intend to exclude his apothecary, or his medicines, or the taking of them, or the instruments and means by which they are applied ; but rather includeth and implieth all these in the one thing mentioned to which they do subserve. So all God’s graces, and all the means of grace, and Christian duties, are contained or implied in the one thing necessary, or supposed to it. Because it is one thing that is necessary as the end, therefore many means are necessary to the obtaining of it. Though there be also a kind of unity (as hath been shewed) among those means.

Quest. ‘ But are not outward things also necessary ? Must we not have food and raiment ? and must we not labour and provide it, and take care for our families, and follow our callings ? Must we not by lawful means avoid reproach and poverty in the world ? ’

Ans. In the way of duty it is as necessary that we labour in our callings, and provide things honest, and subserve God's providence for the maintenance of ourselves and others ; and the things of this life are needful so far as life is needful, that we may have time and strength to do our works, and be supported while we seek the one thing needful. But that which is not necessary for itself, but for another thing, is not simply or principally necessary. So far as heaven may be obtained, and the work of Christianity done without the accommodations of the flesh, so far these worldly things are needless. There is no necessity that you be rich or honourable ; or that you live in health or wealth ; or that you escape the hatred, and reproach, and trouble of a malicious world ! There is no necessity that you should save your lives when Christ requireth them. For he that so saveth his life shall lose it ; Matt. xvi. 25. And that usefulness (which you may in a lower sense call necessity) that any of these things are of, is but in their respect to the one thing necessary, as they are sanctified means to the service of God and our salvation. If your daily bread be to be called necessary, it is not for itself, or for fleshly pleasure, nor ultimately for your life itself ; but to sustain your life while you are seeking after life eternal, and serving him that is the Lord of life. Your credit, or honour, or pleasure in the world, are no further necessary or useful to you, than they promote this great end for yourselves or others. Nothing but God is simply necessary for himself, and nothing else is any way truly necessary but for him.

And therefore as by necessity of precept you must labour in your callings, and seek provision for yourselves and families, you must most carefully watch your hearts that your desires and labours be not carnal, as tending only to carnal ends ; but that you sincerely subject the things desired, to the one thing necessary, for which you must desire them ; and therefore that you desire but such measures and proportions, as are most suitable to that end which is only for itself desirable : even life itself must not be desired simply and ultimately for itself.

As you must pray but for your daily bread, and be content with food and raiment, so you must see, that these be but for better things ; even in order to the doing of the will

of God, the promoting of his kingdom, and the hallowing of his name, which must be first and most desired. The order of your duty is, to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," and then other things are promised with it; Matt. vi. 33. And therefore for it, must be desired and sought.

And if your very food and life must be desired but for this everlasting end, then it is still but one thing that is necessary, and finally to be desired. For the means is willed but with an imperfect willing, because not for itself; and that only hath our full and perfect love, which is loved for itself. Even in the act of love unto the means, it is more properly the end that is loved than the means, and the means is chosen for that end. So that you see that for all the necessity of creatures, and of diligence in our callings, the truth is still clear, that it is only one thing that is truly necessary.

V. *Use 1.* The understanding is the subservient faculty, to let in that light, which may by direction and excitation, guide the will. Having shewed you the truth, I am next to shew you how you may improve it, and so to apply it, as may best help you to apply it to yourselves.

And if I should here fall upon things impertinent, or make it my work to tickle your ears, or exalt myself in your esteem, by an unseasonable ostentation of learning or eloquence, or carry on any such corrupt design, while I should faithfully do the work of God, my text itself would openly condemn me. If one thing be needful, it is that one that I must do myself, while I am exhorting you to do it. And woe be to me, if I should lay by that, to do any other unnecessary work, even to fish for the applause of carnal wits, while my very subject is the reproofs of Christ against a much more tolerable error.

And as to the manner of my admonition, if one thing be needful, I hope you will allow me to be as plain and serious as I can, about this one. And my first address to you shall be for trial.

And I shall make it now my earnest request to you, that you will bethink you how much you are concerned, to compare your hearts and lives with this passage, and judge yourselves by the word of God that is now before you. And for your own sakes do it seriously and faithfully, as passengers

that are hasting to the great assize. What say your consciences, sirs, to this question? Have you indeed lived in the world as men that believe that one thing is necessary? Hath this one had your chiefest care and labour, and have you chosen rather to neglect all other things than this? Look behind you, and judge of the course that you have taken by the light of this one text. I do not ask you, Whether you have heard that one thing is necessary; nor whether you have talked of it, and confessed it to be true; nor whether you have been called Christians by yourselves and others, and have come to church, and forborne those sins that would have most blemished your honour in the world. This is nothing to the question. Thus many thousands do, that were never acquainted with the one thing necessary. Nor do I ask you, Whether you have used to allow God half an hour's lip-service, or formal, drowsy prayer at night, when you have served the world and flesh all day? Nor whether you have been religious on the by, and given God some lean devotions which cost you little, and which your flesh can spare without any great diminution or detriment in its ease, and honour, and profit, and sensual delights. Nor whether you run to some kind of duties of religion, to make all whole, when you come from wilful reigning sin; and so make religion a fortress to your lusts, to quiet your consciences while you serve the flesh. I confess such a kind of religiousness as this, the world is acquainted with. But this is unanswerable to the rule before us.

But the question is, Whether this one thing hath been the treasure and jewel of your estimation; the darling of your affections; the prize of your most diligent endeavours, and the only felicity of your souls?

Sirs, as lightly as you hear this question now, you will one day find that your lives, yea your salvation, lieth upon your answer to it. Can you truly say, as before the Searcher of hearts, that it is he that hath had your hearts? That this one thing hath been more esteemed by you, than all the world besides? That other things have all stooped unto this one, and served under it? And that this hath had the stream of your most hearty affections, the drift of your endeavours, and hath been the matter that you have had first to do, and the thing for which you have lived in the world?

If this be not so, never talk of your Christianity for

shame. Your religion is vain, if this be not your religion. Alas, I know that we have all of us yet too much of the flesh, and are too cold in our affections, and too slow and uneven in our endeavours for our end. But yet for all that I must still tell you, (as I have often done because it is necessary) that here lieth the difference between the truly sanctified soul, and all the hypocrites and half-Christians in the world. Every true Christian is devoted unto God, and hath made a hearty and absolute resignation of himself and all that he hath unto him; and therefore loveth him with his superlative, most appretiative love, and serveth him with the best he hath, and thinks nothing too good or too dear for God, and for the attainment of his everlasting rest. Christ hath the chiefest room in his heart, and the bent and drift of his life is for him. He studieth how he may best serve and please him with his time, his interest, and all that he hath; and if he fall, as it is contrary to the habitual resolution of his soul, and contrary to the scope and current of his heart and life, so he riseth again by repentance with sorrow for his sin, and loathing of himself, and sincerely endeavours to amend, and goeth on resolvedly in his holy course. This is the state of every one that is in a state of life.

But for all hypocrites and half-Christians, their case is otherwise. The world and flesh is dearest to them, and highest in their practical estimation, though not in their speculative; and it hath their highest affections of love and delight, and the very bent and stream of heart and life, while God is served heartlessly on the by, for fear lest they be damned when they can enjoy the world and sin no longer, and is put off with the leavings of the flesh, and hath no more of their hearts, their tongues, their time, their wealth, than it can spare. They ask their flesh how far they shall be religious, and will go no further than will stand with their prosperity in the world. With the first and best they serve the flesh, and with the cheapest and the refuse they serve the Lord. When they go highest in their outside carnal religiousness, they go not beyond this hypocritical, reserved state; and usually, as Cain, they hate Abel for offering a more acceptable sacrifice. God must take up with this from them, or be without. They always serve him with this reserve, though it be not always explicit and discerned by them, 'Provided that it may go well with me in the world, and I

may have some competent proportion of honour, profit or pleasure, and religion may not expose me to be undone.' If God will not take them on these terms (as most certainly he never will), he must go look him other servants; and so he will; and make them know at last unto their sorrow, that he needed not their service, but it was they that needed him, and the benefits of his service.

I thought meet (though I have done it oft before) to give you this difference between the hypocrite and the sincere. And now it is my earnest request unto you all, that you will presently call your souls to an account, and know which of these two courses you have taken; and which of these two is your own condition.

If nature had made you such strangers to yourselves, as that you were unable to answer such a question, I would never trouble you with it; but I suppose by faithful inquiry, you may know this much of yourselves, if you are but willing. You know where it is that you have dwelt, and what it is that you have been doing in the world, and you can review the actions of your lives, though they have been of smaller consequence. Why then may you not quickly know if you will, so great a thing, as What hath been the end and business for which you have lived in the world till now? Have you been running so long, and know not yet what is the prize that you have run for? Have you forgot the errand that you have been so long going on? Have you been busy all your days till now, and know not about what or why? Certainly this is a thing that may be known, if you are willing and diligent to know it. It is for one of these two that you have lived; for the world, or for God. To please your flesh, or to please God and be saved. Either to make provision for earth or heaven. Which of these is it? Deal plainly with yourselves, for your salvation is deeply concerned in the account.

Perhaps you will say, that it was for both; for as you have a soul and body, so you must look to both. Yea, but so as one that knoweth, that one thing is needful. As your body is but the prison, the case, the servant, of your souls, so it must be provided for and used but as a servant, and maintained only in a fitness for its work. But the question is, Which of them hath had the preeminence? Which hath had the life of your affections and endeavours. Which of

them was your end; about which hath been the chief business that you have most carefully and diligently carried on? This is the great question.

You cannot have two masters, though you may have many instruments and fellow-servants. You cannot acceptably serve God, if you serve mammon. Every wicked man may do something in religion, and every good man may do something that is contrary to religion. A carnal man may do something for God, and for his soul; and a spiritual man ought to do something subordinately for his body, and too often, alas, doth something for it inordinately. But which bears the sway? and which is first sought? and which comes behind, and but the leavings of the other?

“Be not deceived: God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap. If you sow to the flesh, of the flesh you shall reap corruption; but if you sow to the Spirit, of the Spirit shall you reap everlasting life;” Gal. vi. 7, 8. “Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world (for themselves). For if any man love the world (with his chiefest love), the love of the Father is not in him;” 1 John ii. 15. Is it not a wonder that any reasonable man can be such a stranger to himself, as not to know what he lives for, and what hath had his heart, and what hath been the principal business of his life? Some by matters you may easily forget or overlook; but can you do so by your end, which hath been your chiefest care and business?

If indeed you no more know your own minds, nor what you have all this while been doing in the world, ask those that you have conversed with; and judge by the effects and signs. Others can tell what you have most seriously talked of. They may conjecture by their observation, what you have most carefully sought, and resolutely adhered to: whether it be God or the flesh; this world or heaven? The one thing needful, or the many troubling trifles in your way. It is like that wise and godly observers can help you to discern it; though sensualists will but deceive you.

A man's love, at least his chiefest love, cannot be hid, but will appear in his behaviour. If you love God above the world, you will seek him and his glory before the world; and if you do so it may partly be discerned, if you have conversed with discerning men. Heaven and earth are not so

like, nor the way to each of them so like, but it may partly be discerned which way men are going, and what they drive at in their daily course.

But I will urge you no further to the trial. I will take it for granted that your consciences are telling many of you, that you have been troubled about many things, while the one thing needful hath been neglected. And if indeed this be your case, suffer me to tell the guilty plainly, what it is that they have done.

1. Whatever you have been doing in the world, you have lost your time, if you have not been seeking the one thing necessary. If you have been gathering riches, or growing up in honour as the rush groweth in the mire (Job viii. 11.), or filling your purses or your barns, or pleasing your fancies and flesh; you have but fooled away your time, and done just nothing, and much worse. Nothing is done, if the one thing necessary be undone. Believe it, time is a precious thing, and ought not to have been thus cast away. When you come to the end of it, the worst and proudest of you shall confess it is precious. Then, O for one year more! O for a few days or hours more, to make sure of this one thing which you should have spent your lives in making sure of. Will you then think thus, and yet can you now afford to cast away twenty or thirty years upon nothing? If time be worth nothing, your lives are worth nothing. And why should a man desire to live for nothing? You love your lives too much, and yet will you so contemptuously cast them away? He hath lost his life, who hath lost the end of his life. The loss of a hundred pounds in money is not (to yourselves) so great a loss, as the loss of a day's or an hour's time. What then is the loss of so many years? Did you ever well consider of this? If you live a thousand years, it is all lost, if you have not spent it in making sure of the one thing necessary. For is not that lost, and worse a thousand times than lost, that is spent in crossing the end that it is given for? and which is no comfort, but terror in the review, and which leaveth no fruit, but grief and disappointment? Let me tell you, If you hold on thus unto the end, you will wish and wish a thousand times, either that you had never had an hour's time, or else that you had had hearts, to have better perceived the worth and use of it, than to cast it away

as you have done upon nothing. It is but one thing that is worth your time and lives.

2. Whatsoever else you have been doing, you have lost all your labour with your time, if this one thing needful have been neglected. No doubt you have been busy since you came into the world; but to little purpose. You might as well have been idle, as so laboriously doing nothing. No doubt many a journey you have rode and gone, and many a hard day's labour you have taken, and sharpened perhaps with care and grief. But you have lost it all, if it were a hundred times more, if it have not been laid out upon the one thing necessary.

And is it not a pitiful thing that men of reason, should vex themselves, and toil their bodies, and suffer hunger, and thirst, and weariness, and make such a stir and pudder in the world, and all for nothing, and in a vain show? How many mornings have you risen to your labour, and how many days and years have you spent in it, and now it is all lost! How many thoughts and fears, and cares have possessed and pestered your minds, and now they are all lost! Some of you have followed your trades, and some your husbandry, and some have run up and down after recreations. Some of you have been scraping riches, and some contriving to keep up their reputation, and some to satisfy their appetites, and live in pleasure and contentments to the flesh; and now look back upon all that you have done and gotten, and tell yourselves whether all this be not lost, yea, alas! much worse than lost. If you be not ready to pass this conclusion at the very heart, it is because your hearts are yet blinded and hardened in sin; but God will soon bring that to your hearts that shall convince you of it. If God have made use of any worldly, sensual person of you, for public good, of church or state, as men do of thorns for hedging to their lands, or of briars to stop a gap, or of firewood to warm their family; yet as to any durable benefit to yourselves, I may well say that all your labour is lost.

And this is not all; but the pains also that you have taken in your formal, hypocritical religion, your hearing, reading, receiving sacraments, and pretended prayer, all the thoughts that ever you had of death, and judgment, and the life to come, and all that you have done with reservations and by halves for your own salvation, this also is all lost.

Except as a less measure of misery may go for gain. If you miss of the one thing necessary, you do but lose your labour, whatever else you seem to gain.

A great stir you make in seeking for preferment, or dominion over others, or about your lands, your honours, or your delights; so great that your neighbours can scarce live quietly by you; and the kingdom cannot be quiet for some of you, nor your own consciences be quiet within you for the desperate work that you engage them in, which they know must be heard of another day. And when all is done you will find you have been but hunting of a feather. You would see this now if God would open your eyes by grace. But if you miss of so seasonable an information, you will see it too late in the land of darkness. When death hath opened your eyes, and your impenitent souls do suddenly awake in another world, you will understand that you made all this stir but in your sleep. As busily and seriously as you acted the part of lords and ladies, of gentlemen, tradesmen, or husbandmen in the world, if you did not seriously and first do the work of true believers for the world to come, you will then find too late that your labour is lost, and all was acted but as in a dream.

Do you believe this now, or do you not? If you do, will you yet go on? If you do not believe it, shew me now what you have gotten by all this stir that you have made in the world, that will follow you one step further than the grave, and that you can say shall be your own to-morrow? If you were to die this hour, will it be any lasting comfort to you, that you have laboured to be rich or honourable, or that you have attained it? or that you had your glut of sensual delights; and a merry life as to the fleshly pleasure as long as it would last? Will you die the more comfortably for any of this? or much the less? That yet you are alive, is the great mercy of God, and not to be ascribed to any of these. And when you cease to live, then these will be your grief and torment.

Beloved hearers, I have no desire, the Lord knows, to discompose your minds, or to disquiet you with any molesting, unnecessary scruples; nor causelessly to dishonour either you or your employments. But I must needs say that it is a doleful case, that men in their wits should spend a life of precious time, and also a great deal of care and labour, in

doing nothing, and much worse than nothing, when they have a work of everlasting consequence to do, and they know that the devil's chiefest hopes do consist in the success of these diversions! I must seriously profess to you, that I am constrained by the word and teachings of God, and by undeniable reason itself, to look upon all the labour of your lives, the highest, and the busiest, but as the picking of straws, of playing with a feather, or riding upon a staff or a hobby-horse, or such like actions as children, fools, or madmen use, as long as you mind not, and seek not after the one thing necessary. Whatever they may be to others, they are no wiser or better to yourselves. This is my judgment; yea, this is the judgment of the Spirit of God; Phil. iii. 8. If Paul was not mistaken, your gain itself is to be accounted loss, and all but dung, in comparison of the knowing and winning of Christ, that you might be found in him, and have his righteousness. Think not the name of dung too base, which God himself hath written here upon your highest endowments and honours, by his Spirit. And indeed what will they all do more than dung to procure you the favour of God, or the pardon of your sins? If you offer him gold, will it do any more than if you offered him so much dirt? Is not the prayer of a beggar heard as soon as of a lord or gentleman? If they would do any thing to buy you peace of conscience, or everlasting life, or if they would but keep you alive on earth, I should not marvel at your course. But when they will do none of this, but make your way to heaven more difficult, yea, your salvation a thing impossible while you thus live after the flesh (Rom. viii. 13.), how then can any easier sentence be passed upon your choice? Be you the greatest or the wisest in your own esteem, or in the esteem of others of your mind, I believe, yea, I am sure, that you are all this while but laboriously idle, and honourably debasing yourselves, and delightfully tormenting yourselves, and wisely befooling yourselves, and thriftily undoing yourselves for ever. I have reason to say that your rising, and honourable, and voluptuous employments, are not only like children's play in the sand, and making them houses with sticks and stones; but so much more pitiful, as the reason which you abuse exceedeth theirs. And could you all attain to be lords and ladies, I should look upon you but as a king or queen upon a chess-board, as

to any felicity that it bringeth to yourselves ; whatsoever use the overruling providence of God may make of you for his churches. The wise merchant is he that seeking pearls doth find this one of greatest price, and selleth all that he hath and buyeth it ; even all the worldly treasures which you so highly value ; Matt. xiii. 45, 46. There is more true riches in this one pearl, than in a thousand loads of sand or dirt. If you will load yourselves with mire and clay, conceiting it to be your treasure, your back will be broken before you will have enough to make you rich.

O sirs, with what eyes, with what hearts do you use to read such passages of Christ that speak so plainly to you, as if he named you, and so piercingly as one would think should make you feel, Luke xiii. 19—21. "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years ; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said to him, Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee ; and then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided ? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God." Would you have Christ speak plainer to you ; or more closely apply it, that you may perceive he speaks to you ? You have lost all the labour of your lives ; but that is not all.

3. But furthermore consider, that if the one thing needful have been neglected, whatever else you have been doing or whatever you have got (unless as preparatory to this), you have not only lost your labour, but you have all this while been busily undoing yourselves, and labouring for your own perdition.

If it were but the loss of your time and labour, you would then die but as brutes, and be as if you had never been ; and to those that have brutified themselves, this will seem more tolerable, than to live in holiness to God. But alas, you have done much worse than this ! You have not only been digging your own graves, but barring up against yourselves the doors of heaven, and kindling the unquenchable fire to torment you ; Mark ix. 4.

I beseech you give me a considerate hearing, you ambitious gentlemen, you covetous worldlings, and you that serve your lusts and pleasures ! Do you think you had been doing the work of wise men, if you had all this while been burning your own fingers, or cutting your own flesh, or set-

ting your own or your neighbours' houses on fire? What would you have us call that man that would live in such employments as these, and yet would be accounted wise or honourable? Do I need to tell thee, as Nathan did David, that "thou art the man?" Do I need in so plain a case to tell you, that you have been doing worse (I speak not rashly), a thousand times worse against your souls, than this would have been which is supposed to be only against your bodies? Alas! self-destroyers, what do you mean? Did God send you hither on no better an errand than to kindle and blow the fire of his wrath, and fall into it when you have kindled it? Have you no better work in the world to do, than to prepare yourselves a place in hell, and with a great deal of care, and cost, and stir, to labour for damnation, as if you were afraid of losing it?

I know you will say, 'God forbid, we hope better, we intend no such thing.' But alas, the question is not, What you intend, but what you are doing? Not whether it be your desire that everlasting death should be the wages of sin, but whether it be the law and unchangeable will of God? Rom. vi. 23. If you seek not first God's kingdom and his righteousness, and look not after the one thing needful, with your chiefest estimation, resolution, and endeavour, as sure as Christ is true, this will prove your case at last, though now you wink, and wilfully go on, and will not believe it. As sure as the Gospel is true, this is true. There are but two ends, heaven and hell; and if you miss the former, you fall into the latter. "If you live after the flesh, you shall die," whatever you imagine; and you must "mortify the deeds of the flesh by the Spirit," if you "will live;" Rom. viii. 13. If you see a man cutting his own throat, and you ask him, 'What are you doing, man?—will you kill yourself?' and he answereth you, 'No, God forbid; I have no such meaning; I will hope better;' would you think that this would save his life? or that his hopes and meanings would prove him ever the wiser man? I tell you, from the word of God, it is one of the plainest truths that is there contained, that if you value not, choose not, and seek not the one thing needful above all other things whatsoever, you are all this while but sowing the seeds of endless misery, whose fruit you must reap in "outer darkness, where will be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth;" Matt. xiii.

42.50. You are "treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will give to every man according to his works;" Rom. ii. 5, 6. You are sowing in pleasure to the flesh, in eating and drinking, and mirth, and honour; but you shall reap in corruption, lamentation, and woe; Gal. vi. 7, 8. "For woe to you that now laugh, for you shall mourn and weep. Woe to you that are rich (and have no better, but want the everlasting riches), for you have received your consolation. Woe to you that are full (and yet are empty of Christ and grace), for you shall hunger;" Luke vi. 24, 25. These are the words of Christ himself, and therefore true if Christ be true.

Yea, more than this; let me have leave to tell you, (for why should I not tell you of your greatest folly, and that which is necessary for you to know?) as long as you neglect the one thing necessary, you are acting the part of the most deadly enemies against yourselves. No enemy that you have in all the world, could do that against you, as you do against yourselves. You abhor the devil; and I blame you not; for his malice and enmity deserveth it: but you do much worse against yourselves than the devil himself could ever do. To tempt you to sin is not so much as to consent to it and commit it. He can but entice you, and constrain you. It is you that are the neglecters of your Maker and Redeemer, and the wilful rejecters of your own felicity. Satan doth bad enough against you by temptation, but you do worse by yielding and sinning; much worse than all the devils in hell could do against you. For God hath not given all of them so much power over you, as he hath given you over yourselves.

Lord, what a distracted case is the ungodly world in! They hate any man else that they do but imagine is their enemy! Though he do but diminish their worldly wealth or honour, they cannot forgive him. If a man give one of them a box on the ear he cannot bear it. And as for the devil, who is the common enemy, they spit at his name, and think they bless themselves from him. And yet these same men do spend all their care, and time, and labour, in doing more against themselves, than all their enemies could do in earth or hell; and are worse than devils to themselves; and yet they never fall out with themselves for it; but can for-

give themselves as easily as if they did themselves no harm. This is true, too true, sirs, as harsh as it seemeth to your ears. And if it displease you to hear of it, bethink yourselves what it is to do it; and how God and all wise men must judge of you that have no more mercy on yourselves. Certainly it is much worse to do it, than to tell you what you do. God tells men of their sin, and God doth nothing but what is good; but it is themselves only that commit it. I beseech you do but understand what you are doing, as long as the one thing necessary is neglected by you.

4. Consider also, that whatsoever else you have been doing in the world, if you have not done the one thing needful, you have unmanned yourselves, and lived below your reason, and in plain English, you have lived as besides your wits.

I give you no harder language than God himself hath frequently given you in his word, and than you will shortly give yourselves, if you repent not; yea, and sooner if you do repent. If you have (in this) the use of your reason, you must needs know what you have your reason for. And I beseech you tell me for what you have it, if not to serve and please your Maker, and prepare for your everlasting state? Is it only that you may know how to plough and sow, and follow your trades and pleasures in the world, and satisfy your flesh a little while, and then die as the beasts that perish? None of you, I suppose will say so, that calls himself a Christian. If God had made you for no higher things than beasts, he would have given you no higher faculties and endowments. As they be not made to enjoy God, so they have no knowledge of him; he sendeth not his word to them, and calleth them not to learn the knowledge of his will. But you know, or may know, that there is a God, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and are capable of loving him, attending him, and serving him, and therefore of enjoying him. Beasts are not ruled by the hopes and fears of a life after this. For their nature and end do not require it. But men must be thus ruled, or else there can be no sufficient ruling of them, in an ordinary way: which shews that the nature of men is capable of the things which are the matter of their hopes and fears.

Verily, sirs, I think as to any good that cometh by it,

there is very little difference between having reason, and having none, if we had nothing to do with it, but cunningly to lay up our food, and make provision for this corruptible flesh, and had not another life to mind. It were no such great difference, in my opinion, as it commonly goes for, whether we were men or dogs, if it were only for the matters of this transitory life. For though I may not deny but yet man were the nobler creature, yet alas the difference would be but gradual and small, as an ape or dog excels a swine. And as to his happiness, it is doubtful whether man would not have the worst of it. For as brutes have not man's knowledge, so they have not his toil and trouble of mind, his care, and fear, and griefs, and disappointments. Nor have they so terrible forethoughts of death through all their lives, as man must have, much less such fears of what would follow after death.

And therefore I may boldly say, that you have thrown away your wits, and laid by your reason as to the principal use of it, if you have forgot, or have not chiefly sought the one thing necessary. Where were your wits when a lump of flesh was preferred before immortal souls? and when the trouble and dung of a transitory world, was more esteemed than God and endless glory? Where were your wits when you might have had Christ, and life in him, and his pardoning, healing, sanctifying grace, and you had no mind of him, and were not sensible of your necessity, and passed him by with as much neglect, as if you could have been saved without him? When you might long ago have made sure of heaven; and now you are even ready to drop into hell, and stay but for a fever, or consumption, or some other disease to cut the thread, and turn the key, unless a speedy, sound conversion shall yet prevent it. What have you done in all your lifetime that should make a wise man judge you reasonable? Is that your reason to be 'Penny wise and pound foolish;' to be wise to do evil, and to have no knowledge to do good? Jer. iv. 22. To run up and down for I know not what, and to leave that undone that you were created and redeemed for? Can you think that it is reasonable to make such ado for the air of dying men's applause, and to be well thought of, or to live like gentlemen, or to the contentment of a fleshly mind, when you know that you are just ready to pass out of this world into an endless life of joy or torment,

(yea, certainly of torment, if you thus hold on) ! Where all these things will afford you no relief or benefit ; but the memory of your course will be the fuel of your misery. Can that man be wise that damns his soul ? Can he deserve the name of a sober man, that will sell his salvation for so short, so small, so filthy a pleasure as sin affordeth ? Is he worthy the name or reputation of a wise man, that hath not wit enough to escape eternal fire ? nor wit enough to forbear laying hands upon himself, and doing all this against his own soul ? What think you, is not the case plain enough ?

Be not offended if I speak yet plainer to you ; for in a case so lamentable, how can we be too plain or serious ? Suppose you knew a prince or lord, that had an itch upon him, which the physician offereth speedily and easily to cure ; but he hath so much pleasure in scratching, that he doth not only refuse the cure, lest it deprive him of his delight, but he will give his kingdom or lordship to one that will scratch him but a little while, though he be sure to live a beggar after, all his days. I put it to yourselves, What name you would give this man, or what esteem you would have of him. Do you think that any ungodly, worldly person is wiser than this man ? Alas, their case is so much worse, that there is no comparison. They are more foolish than your hearts can now conceive, or than I am able fully to express. You have now the itch of pride and lust ; and your throats must be pleased in your meats and drinks ; and you itch after riches, and honour, and recreations ; and Christ telleth you by his word, that these are but your sick desires, and that the pleasing of them tends to kill you ; and he offereth you for nothing a safe, and certain, and speedy cure. But you refuse it, and will not hearken to him. You must be scratched, whatever it cost you. You must have your riches, and honour, and fleshly pleasure, as the felicity which you cannot part with, though it cost you your salvation. Though God be neglected, and his favour lost, and your souls be lost, and the one thing needful cast aside, you must have your carnal imaginations gratified. And is this your wisdom ? The Lord bless us from such a kind of wisdom.

Yet this is not the worst. I will shew you one strain more of the distraction of the ungodly world. If these men do but see one person of a hundred that are more diligent for hea-

ven than earth, to fall into melancholy, or distress of soul ; or suppose it were into some loss of reason, they presently cry out against religion, and strictness, and preciseness, and making so much ado to be saved ; and say it is the way to make men mad. Hence comes the proverb of the Papists (‘ Spiritus Calvinianus est spiritus melancholicus’); and of the profane among ourselves, that ‘ A Puritan is a Protestant frightened out of his wits.’ They dare not study the Scripture so much, nor meddle with such high matters as their salvation, nor be so godly, nor meditate on the world to come, lest it should drive them out of their wits. O miserable men ! As if it were possible for you to be more dangerously mad than you are already ! (Unless by growing unto greater wickedness !) Do you lay out your wit, and strength, and time in feeding a corruptible body for the grave, and spend your lives in running after your own shadows, while your everlasting life is forgotten or neglected ? Do you sell your Saviour with Judas for a little money ; and change your part in God and glory, for the brutish pleasures of sin for a season ? And are you afraid of altering this course of life, and turning to God, lest it should make you mad ? Lord, what a besotting thing is sin ! What a cunning cheater is the devil ! What a deluded, distracted sort of people are the ungodly ! Will you run from God, from Christ, from grace, from mercy, from Scripture, from the godly, and from heaven itself for fear of being mad ? Why what greater madness can you fear than this ? What worse is human nature capable of ? Unless it be the addition of a further measure of the same, and unless it be to hold on in that way, and persecute the contrary with such like aggravations of your madness, I know not of any worse that you should fear. Will you run to hell to prove yourselves to be in your wits ? Again I say, the Lord bless us from such a kind of wit. Nay, hell itself hath no such distractedness as yours. The difference between the one thing needful, and your many things, is there better, though too late, understood ! Is loving God the way to be mad ? and loving the world and fleshly pleasures the way to be wise ? Is conversing with God in humble prayer, and believing his love, and loving him, and delighting in him, and speaking of his name, and word, and works unto his praise, and hoping to live with him for ever, I say is this (which is the work of a

believer) a liker course to make men mad, than serving the devil, and drudging in the world, and living under the curse of God, and in continual danger of damnation? What men are they that dare entertain such horrid, and unreasonable suggestions?

I confess we are not unacquainted with the sadness and melancholy that some persons have contracted by religious employments; and perhaps one of a thousand may lose their wits. But I must tell you all these following points, that will shew you that religion is not to be blamed for it, nor avoided.

1. It is ordinarily persons of the weaker sex, or of very weak brains, and very strong passions, that are naturally inclined to it, and are not able to bear any long and serious thoughts, about matters of that moment, which are apt to make the deepest impressions. But persons that naturally are of sound and calm dispositions, are seldom troubled with any such effects.

2. It is usually the case of persons that mistake the nature of religion, though not in the main, yet in some particulars of great concernment; that study not sufficiently the love of God declared to us in our Redeemer, but feed their grief and troubles only by the thoughts of their own infirmities, and that consider not that the chief part of religion doth consist in love, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and in thanksgiving and delightful praising our Creator. So that it is not long of religion if men will leave out the chief part of religion, and make themselves a religion of so much only as may break their troubles.

3. And I must further tell you, that as I have had opportunity of knowing the state of as many troubled, distempered minds as any one of you, whoever he be; so I must needs bear witness, that I have met with many that have been distracted by worldly cares, or sorrows, or discontents, for one that ever I knew distracted with the cares about the matter of their salvation. And yet though it be worldly care and sorrow that most commonly bringeth death and madness, you will not therefore give over your callings, and resolve that you will meddle no more with meat, or drink, or clothes, or houses, or lands, or friends, or children. Nay, it were well if you would be brought to moderation, and taken off your inordinate desires.

And yet in the conclusion I must tell you, that, though I know that the loss of a man's understanding is a very grievous affliction, and such as I hope God will never lay upon me, yet I had a thousand times rather go distracted to Bedlam with the excessive care about my salvation, than be one of you that cast away the care of your salvation for fear of being distracted, and will go among the infernal Bedlams into hell for fear of being mad. The height of your carnal wisdom is more deplorable than their distraction. For God will condemn no man because he is distracted, nor so much as blame him for it, unless as it is the fruit of sin, no more than he will condemn or blame an idiot or a beast because they have no use of reason. If David had been what he feigned himself to be, (1 Sam. xxi. 13, 14.) it would not have cast him out of God's favour, so far as one sin did, much less so far as the ungodly are. A man may go to heaven for such a madness. But you that have reason for the world, but none for God; that are wise to do evil, that have wit to destroy yourselves, and serve the flesh, but none to look after your recovery and salvation; it is you that shall have the stripes, the many, the great, the endless stripes. You that have so much wit as that you glory in it, and think yourselves wiser than the rest of the world, and yet have not wit to know, and love, and serve your Maker; nor to value and seek first the one thing necessary, it is you that will prove the miserable fools.

If you had not a natural capacity of understanding, you had had no sin. But now you have no cloak for your sin, when you have the worldly wisdom, which is foolishness with God, and have a sinning, selfdestroying wit, and are wilfully void of the wisdom that should save you (1 Cor. i. 25. iii. 19. Jer. viii. 9.), when you have not a necessitated, but a voluntary distraction; and "this is your condemnation, that light is come into the world, and you have loved darkness rather than light, because your deeds were evil;" John iii. 19.

If you think this wilful and senseless neglect of the one thing needful is not a sufficient evidence to prove that miserable distraction which I charge upon you, will you but believe your Maker, and let the word of God be judge between us, and mark what language it giveth to such as I now describe, 2 Thess. iii. 2. Jer. iv. 22. Eccles. vii. 25.

2 Pet. ii. 12. Psal. xcii. 6. xciv. 8. Jer. x. 8. 14. Deut. xxxii. 6. Psal. lxxiii. 3. 22. 2 Sam. xiv. 10. In these places your course hath no better titles, than 'unreasonable, foolish, brutish, sottish,' &c. even from the God of wisdom himself, who is the fittest to give you the character that you deserve. When you have truly considered of your way, if indeed you find that you have dealt like wise men, hold on and say so at the last, when you have eaten the fruit of your doing, and have seen the end.

5. Furthermore consider, that whatever else you have been doing in the world, if the one thing necessary be yet undone, you have lost and abused all the mercies that God hath bestowed on you. Many a thousand precious mercies have been given you. And to what use, but to help you to everlasting mercy, and to prevent your everlasting misery ! This is the end, and this is the life and excellency of all your mercies. For all present mercies have the nature of a means to a further end. And the goodness and nature of the means consisteth in its fitness to promote the end. And therefore you have lost all the mercies that you have received, if you are never the nearer your end for them, and if they have not promoted the love of God, and your salvation. You have had health, and strength, and time, and peace, and liberty, and some of you also wealth and honour in the world. But you have lost them all, if your salvation be not furthered by them. Many a preservation you have had, when others have been cut off before your faces ; and many a deliverance from dangers known or unknown, and much of the fruit of that patience of God, which hath till now attended you in your sin. Many a sermon you have heard, and many a warning you have had, and you have been planted in God's vineyard, and daily watered with the ordinances of grace. But all these are lost, if the one thing necessary hath been neglected. Nothing in this world doth you good indeed, any further than it promoteth your everlasting good. And do you think that you have dealt kindly or justly with God, to deal so contemptuously with all his mercies, as to cast them away, and tread them under foot ? When you want but food, or raiment, or liberty, or health, you value them and pray for them ; and when you have them what do you do with them, but throw them as in the channel, and sacrifice them to your lusts and enemies ? When death looketh you in the

face, you begin to know the worth of time, and then, O what would you not give for a little more, and that God would try you a few years longer. And when you have time, what do you with it, but serve the devil, and cast it away for nothing, and spend it in preparing for everlasting sorrows! How can you for shame cry to God for mercy in your next distress, when you have contemptuously thrown away the mercies of twenty, or thirty, or forty years already. If your own children should ask you for meat or drink, and when they have it should throw it to the dogs; or ask you for money, and cast it into the dirt, and do thus a hundred and a hundred times over, would you go on to give it them because they cry for it?

O sirs, that you could but use your reason in the matters for which it was given you by your Maker! Either time and mercy is worth something, or nothing! If it be worth nothing, never beg for it, and never be sad when it is taken from you. Why make you such a stir for that which is nothing worth? (I mean your corporal mercies, for spiritual mercies you can be too well content to be without.) But if they be worth any thing, why do you cast them away, and make no better use of them? What good do you with them? or what good do they do you? Believe it, sinners, God doth not despise his mercies as you do. He will not always give you meat, and drink, and health, and strength, and life to play with, and do nothing with. He will teach you better to value them before he hath done with you. Not that he thinks them too good for you, but he would have them be better to you than you will let them be. He would have every bit you eat, to be used to strengthen you in your walk to heaven, and every hour of your time to help you towards eternal happiness, and every present mercy to further your everlasting mercy; that so by the improvement their value might be advanced, and they may be mercies indeed to you. Be ruled by God, and you shall receive more in one mercy, than you do now in a thousand. But if you will do nothing with them, blame him not if he take them from you, and leave you destitute of what you knew not how to use.

Nay, your sin is greater than merely to cast away your mercies. You do not only lose them, but turn them all into a curse, and undo your souls with that which is given for the sustentation of your bodies. While you know no bet-

ter use of mercies, than to please your senses, and accommodate your flesh, and forget the one thing needful, which is the end of all, you turn them all into sin, and fight against God by them, and strengthen his enemy and your own, and block up your way to heaven by them, and treasure up wrath for the dreadful day, when your wealth shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire; Jas. v. 1—3. Rom. ii. 5. You contemptuously cast that bread to dogs, which he giveth you to supply your own necessities. You treacherously carry over his provision to the enemy. Consider this, you that say you hope to be saved, because God is merciful. You have found indeed that God is merciful, by large experience. But if you do not learn, and quickly learn to make a better use of his mercies, abused mercy will prove your everlasting misery. O what a reckoning will you have! What a load to press you down to hell! Unless you would have used them better, it had been easier for you, if these temporal mercies had been denied you. Can that man look to be saved by mercy, that would not be entreated to consent that mercy should save him in the day of salvation; in the accepted time; but served the devil with those very mercies that would have saved him? God sendeth you his mercies to kill your sins, and sanctify you, and engage you to himself; and if you will feed your sins with them, and make them your idols, and forsake God for them, and be false to him, to your covenant, and your duty, and neglect that one thing for which he gave them to you, you do not only lose them but turn them to a curse. And alas, poor sinners, what will you have to fly to, to trust in, or to comfort you, when mercy abused hath not only forsaken you, but falls upon you as a mountain, and feedeth your aggravated, endless misery?

6. Moreover, whilst you neglect the one thing necessary you neglect Christ himself, and reject the saving benefit of his bloodshed, and refuse the healing work of his Spirit, and the precious benefits which he hath offered you in the Gospel. And how can you escape if you neglect so great salvation? Heb. ii. 3. How will you be saved when you refuse the only Saviour? There is indeed enough in Christ to heal and save the humbled soul, that thirsteth for his righteousness and salvation, and valueth and seeketh him as a Sa-

viour; and if you would thus come to him, you might have life: John v. 40. But while you give yourselves to please the flesh, and follow the world, and look so little after Christ, or after the ends and benefits of his sufferings and grace, Christ is as no Christ to you; and grace is as no grace to you; and the Gospel is as no Gospel to you; and you will be never the more saved, than if there had no Saviour ever come into the world, or there had never grace been given to the world, or there had never been promise made, or Gospel preached to the world. For Christ will not save them that continue to neglect him, and set light by all the mercy that he offereth, and the salvation which he hath purchased, and do not esteem and use him as a Saviour, and cannot find enough in God and glory, to take off their hearts from the pleasures and idols of the flesh. If Christ "would have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings and you would not" (Matt. xxiii. 37.), you will be as far from being saved by him, as if you had never heard of his name.

And yet that is not all: if you prevent it not by true conversion, you will wish a thousand and a thousand times that this were all. But there is worse than this; for Christ will not leave a man of you as he finds you. If you are so far in love with worldly wealth and fleshly pleasure, that you can taste no sweetness in his grace, and see no desirable glory in his kingdom, he will make you taste the bitterness of his wrath, and feel the weight of his severest justice. The most compassionate Saviour is the most dreadful Judge to those that will not be saved by his grace. It will be easier for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for those that were the obstinate refusers of his Gospel; Matt. vi. 11, 12. "He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy, under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, that hath trodden under foot the Son of God?" Heb. x. 28, 29. "See therefore that ye refuse not him that speaketh: for if they escaped not that refused him that spake on earth, how much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven?" Heb. xii. 23.

7. As long as you neglect the one thing needful, whatever good conceits of yourselves you have entertained, and whatever hopes, or peace, or comfort you have built upon those conceits, they are all but mere delusions, and irrational,

like the laughter of a madman, that is no comfort to the standers by, who know that it is but the fruit of his distemper, and maketh him an object of more compassion. What wisdom is it to look high and carry it gallantly in the world, when you know not but vengeance may overtake you the next hour? Alas man, thou hast to do with God! Though thou see him not, it is he that upholds thee, and observeth thee, and looketh for love and duty from thee, and will be glorified by thee, or thou shalt dearly answer it. God will not be neglected and abused at so cheap a rate as sottish infidels imagine; "He despiseth thee, if thou despise him;" (1 Sam. ii. 20.) and thou despisest him if thou despise his messengers, and word, and ways; Luke x. 16. 1 Thess. iv. 8. And if God despise thee, what honour is it to thee to be stout-hearted and high in thy own conceit, and to live applauded by thyself and others? Think of yourselves as well as you will, God counteth you worse than the basest brutes, as long as you make yourselves so by neglecting the one thing for which you have your reason. When you swagger it out in the world, you do but gingle your fetters, and glory in your shame; Phil. iii. 18, 19. While fools admire you, God abhorreth you; he "laugheth you to scorn, and hath you in derision," as he expresseth himself after the manner of men; Prov. i. 26—28. Psalm ii. 4. When you are proud of your riches, or honour, with such as yourselves, you are but proud of the bonds of your captivity; 2 Tim. ii. 26. Though you live as carelessly and merrily, and laugh as heartily, and sport yourselves as fearlessly as if all were safe, and nothing ailed you, yet your mirth is but your madness; (Eccles. vii. 4. 6. ii. 2.) and God seeth that your day (a woful day) is coming, (Psal. xxxvii. 13.); and you know not but you may the next hour be tormented in hell, that this hour are so pleasant and confident on earth. And is this a desirable or rational kind of mirth? Did you but now foresee the end, did you see what you must see, or feel a little of what you must feel, you would presently be far from mirth or laughter; it would spoil your sport, and turn your tune to doleful lamentations. O short, unsatisfactory pleasure! O endless, easeless woe, how quickly wilt thou surprise them that little dream of such a change! You say religion is a melancholy thing; but verily your condition is so much worse than melancholy, that it may make a man me-

lancholy to think of men in so sad a case. If any thing in the world will make a man melancholy, methinks it should be to stand in your unhappy state, and thence to look into eternity, and to think of your enmity to heaven, and that you have no part in Christ, no title to his kingdom; and to think what haste you are making to your infernal home, and how fast the wheels of night and day do hurry your unprepared souls to judgment, and that your "judgment lingereth not, and your damnation slumbereth not," as the Holy Ghost speaketh; 2 Pet. ii. 3. Whether you sleep or wake, be sure it sleepeth not. In a word, to neglect the one thing needful, is to neglect heaven itself and your salvation; to neglect heaven is to lose it; and lose heaven and lose all. And what comfort can the forethoughts of life everlasting afford a soul in a state of sin, that is passing to everlasting misery? And what comfort can any thing in this transitory life afford that man, that hath no matter of comfort in the life to come, yea, that must there live in endless sorrows? O let me not taste of that frantic and unreasonable mirth, that tendeth to such heaviness, and driveth away those wise, recovering thoughts that are necessary to prevent it! For the Lord's sake, and for your soul's sake, all you that neglect the one thing needful, will you but search the Scriptures, and soberly consider whether all this be not certain truth; and if it be, how it should affect you, and what a change in reason it should make upon you! I have done with this Use. If you have taken a survey of your own hearts and lives, will you next, for the exercising of your compassion, look a little further.

Use 2. If one thing be needful, and the neglect of this be so unreasonable, so unmanly, and so dangerous as we have seen it proved, then what an object of compassion and lamentation is the distracted world! Look upon this text of Scripture, and look also upon the course of the earth, and consider of the disagreement, and whether it be not still as before the flood, that all the imaginations of man's heart are evil continually; Gen. vi. 7. Were it but possible for a man to see the affections and motions of all the world at once, as God seeth them, what a pitiful sight would it be! What a stir do they make, alas poor fools, for they know not what! while they forget, or slight, or hate the one thing necessary. What a heap of gadding ants should we see, that do nothing

but gather sticks and straws ! Look among persons of every rank, in cities and country, and look into the families about you, and see what trade it is that they are most busily driving on, whether it be for heaven or earth ! and whether you can discern by their care and labours that they understand what is the one thing necessary ? They are as busy as bees, but not for honey, but in spinning such a spider's web, as the besom of death will presently sweep down ; Job viii. 14. They labour hard ; but for what ? for the food that perisheth, and not for that which will endure to everlasting life ; John vi. 27. They are diligent seekers ; but for what ? Not first for God, his kingdom and righteousness ; but for that which they might have had as an addition to their blessedness ; Matt. vi. 33. They are still doing ; but what are they doing ? even undoing themselves by running away from God, to hunt after the perishing pleasures of the world. Instead of providing for the life to come, they are making provision for the flesh to fulfil its lusts ; Rom. xiii. 14. Some of them hear the word of God ; but they choke it presently by the deceitfulness of riches, and the cares of this life ; Luke viii. 14. They are careful and troubled about many things ; but the one thing that should be all to them, is cast by as if it were nothing. Providing for the flesh and minding the world, is the employment of their lives. They trouble themselves with it, and trouble their families, and their nearest relations, and oftentimes trouble the whole town or place where they live ; so that unless we will let them have their bone to themselves, and give them our cloak when they have taken our coat, and say as Mephibosheth ' Let him take all,' there is no living quietly by them. A dog at his carrion, or a swine in his trough, is not more greedy than many of these sensualists, that labour of the ' Caninus appetitus' to their trash. But to holiness they have no appetite, and are worse than indifferent to the things that are indeed desirable. They have no covetousness for the things that they are commanded earnestly to covet ; They have so little hunger and thirst after righteousness, that a very little or none will satisfy them. Here they are pleading always for moderation, and against too much, and too earnest, and too long. And all is too much for them that is above stark naught, or dead hypocrisy ; and all is too earnest and too long, that would make religion seem a business, or would

engage them to seem serious in their own profession, or put them past jest in the worship of God, and the matters of their salvation. Let but their servants or children neglect but their worldly business (which I confess they should not do), and they shall hear of it with both ears. But if they sin against God, or neglect his word or worship, they shall meet with more patience than Eli's sons did. A cold reproof is usually the best; and it is well if they be not encouraged in their sin; and if a child or servant that begins to be serious for their salvation, be not rebuked, derided, and hindered by them. If on their days of labour they oversleep themselves, they shall be sure to be called up to work (and good reason); but when do they call them up to prayer? when do they urge them to read, or consider, or confer of the things that concern their everlasting life? The Lord's own day, which is appointed to be set apart for matters of this nature, is wasted in idleness or worldly talk. Come at any time into their company, and you may have talk enough, and too much, of news, or of other men's matters; of their worldly business, sports, and pleasures. But about God and their salvation, they have so little to say, and that so heartlessly and on the by, as if they were things that belonged not to their care and duty, and no whit concerned them. Talk with them about the renovation of the soul, and the nature of holiness, and the life to come; and you shall find them almost as dumb as a fish, as dry as a chip, or as erroneous or insensible as those that speak but words by rote, to shew you how little they savour or mind the things of the Spirit. The most understand not matters of this nature, nor much desire or care to understand them. If one would teach them personally, they are too old to be catechised or to learn, though not too old to be ignorant of the matters which they were made for, and are preserved for in the world. They are too wise to learn to be wise, and too good to be taught how to be good; though not too wise to follow the seducements of the devil and the world, nor too good to be the slaves of satan, and the despisers and enemies of goodness. If they do any thing which they call a serving of God, it is some cold and heartless use of words to make themselves believe that for all their sins they shall be saved; so that God will call that a serving of their sins and abominations, which they call a serving of God. Some of

them will confess that holiness is good ; but they hope God will be merciful to them without it. And some do so hate it, that it is a displeasing, irksome thing to them, to hear any serious discourse of holiness, and they detest and deride those as fanatic, troublesome precisians, that diligently seek the one thing necessary. So that if the belief of the most may be judged by their practices, we may confidently say, that they do not practically believe that ever they shall be brought to judgment, or that there is any heaven or hell to be expected ; and that their confession of the truth of the holy Scriptures, and their profession of the articles of the Christian faith, are no proofs that they heartily take them to be true. Who can be such a stranger to the world, as not to see that this is the case of the greatest part of men ? And which is worst of all, they go on in this course against all that can be said to them, and will give no impartial, considerate hearing to the truth which would recover them to their wits, but live as if it would be a felicity to them in hell to think that they came thither by wilful resolution, and in despite of the remedy. And is it not a sad prospect to a man that believeth in the word of God, and life to come, to look upon such a distracted world ? O sirs, if Jesus Christ be wise that condemneth their course and them, then certainly all these men are fools. And if Christ knew what he said, we must needs think that they know not what they do. O what is the matter that reasonable men should have no more use of their reason in things of such importance, than thus to neglect their everlasting state for a thing of naught ? Did God make them unreasonable, or give them understandings incapable of things of such high concernment ? Or rather, have they not drowned their reason in sensuality, and wilfully poisoned it with malicious averseness to God and holiness ? What is the matter that the one thing needful is no more regarded ? Hath God made them believe that they shall dwell here for ever, and never die ? No, surely ; this is so gross a lie, that the devil himself cannot make them believe it. They know that they must die, as sure as they are alive. And yet they prepare not, but waste their days in scraping in this dunghill world, as if they were to go no further. Did God never warn them by a sermon, or sickness, to prepare for the life which they must live for ever ? Yes, many a time ; but they would take no warning. Did God

never tell them that after this life there is another, where they must live in endless joy or torment? Yes, and they professed that they did believe it. They heard it a hundred times over, till they were weary of hearing it. Did God make them believe that they shall die like beasts that have no further to go, nor any other life to live? No; if they do believe this, it is the devil and not God that maketh them believe it. What then is the matter that the one thing needful is no more regarded? Hath God shut up their souls in desperation, so that it is in vain to seek, or trouble themselves for that of which there is no hope? O no! his compassion hath provided them a full remedy; by the death of his Son redemption is procured, and he hath made them a deed of gift of Christ, and pardon, and eternal life, and tendered it to them, that upon their acceptance it may be theirs. Many a time he hath offered this mercy to them, and many a time hath he urged them to accept it. He hath set before them life and death, and given them their choice, and directed and persuaded them to choose aright. Impossibility of attainment is not their hindrance; for mercy beseecheth and importuneth them to accept it, and grace and salvation are brought unto their hands. O wonderful! What then is left to take off a reasonable creature from minding and preferring its own everlasting, great concerns? Is it because they have done their work already, and having made sure of heaven, have time to turn themselves to other matters? Alas, no, the most are far from any such assurance; and have done but little to procure it. If they were to die this hour, they know not where their souls shall be the next. And if death even now should lay its terrible hands upon them, they have no other comfort than to yield unto necessity, and leave their souls by a short security, to try the passage of their unavoidable change, unless they are comforted by such presumptuous self-deceit, which the next moment after death will vanish, and never return unto them more; Job viii. 13, 14. xi. 20. xxvii. 8. Prov. xi. 7.

This is the case of the miserable world; but they have not hearts to pity themselves, nor can we make them willing to be delivered, because we cannot make them know their case. If a man fall into a pit, we need not spend all the day to persuade him that he is there, and to be willing to be helped out of it. But with these fleshly, miserable

souls, the time that should be spent by themselves and us for their recovery, must be spent to make them believe that they are lost ; and when all is done we leave them lost, and have lost our labour, because we cannot prevail with them to believe it. Drown they will, and perish everlastingly, because the time that should be spent in saving them, must be spent in making them know that they are sinking, and after all they will not believe it ; and therefore will not lay hold on the hand that is stretched forth to pull them out. The narrative of the savage people of Soldania doth notably represent their state. Those people live naked, and feed upon the carrion-like carcases of beasts, and hang the stinking guts about their necks for ornaments, and wear hats made of the dung, and carve their skins, and will not change these loathsome customs. Some of them being drawn into our ships, were carried away for England. When they came to London and saw our stately buildings, and clothing, and provisions, they were observed to sigh much, which was thought to have been in compassion of their miserable country, which so much differed from ours. When they had stayed long among us, and got so much acquaintance with our civility and order, and all that belongs to the life of man, as that they were thought fit to communicate it to their countrymen, the next voyage they were brought back, and set on shore in their own country, to draw some of the rest to come into the ships, and see and enjoy what they had done (who had purposely been used as might most content them). But as soon as they were landed, they leaped for joy, and cried, ‘Soldania,’ and cast away their clothes, and came again in the sight of our ships, with dung on their heads and guts hanging about their necks, triumphing in their sordid nakedness. Just so do worldly, sensual men, in the matters of salvation. If against their wills they are carried into cleaner ways and company, and the beauty of holiness, and the joys of heaven are opened to them, they are weary of it all the while ; and when we expect they should delight themselves in the felicity that is opened to them, and draw their old acquaintance to it, and be utterly ashamed of their former base and sinful state, they are gone when the next temptation comes, and return with the dog unto their vomit, and with the washed swine to wallow in the mire (2 Pet. ii. 21, 22.),

and glory in their filth and shame, and only mind their earthly things; Phil. iii. 18.

Use 3. By this time you may see yourselves that the disease of sinners is in their own hearts, and it is that that must be healed if they will be saved. But what should we do to get into those hearts, to search your sores and work the cure? I come now to the principal part of my message to you; but will you indeed entertain it, if it prove itself to be from God? How the case standeth with mankind, you have heard in my text from Christ himself. How one thing is needful; and how the busy, idle world is diverted from this one thing, by many needless, troublesome things to their own destruction. If hence I warn you of your danger, and tell you of your duty, and exhort you to take another course than you have done, I hope you will confess I do but what is needful both for you and me, and what you have no reason to contradict. Come then for the Lord's sake, and let us treat practically and successfully about so great a business; and make something of it before we leave it; and end not till we amend what we find amiss. What course then will you take for the time to come? Will you go on to trouble yourselves about many things, and neglect the one thing needful, as you have done? Dare you harbour such a purpose? or dare you stifle those thoughts and motions that would tend to better purposes? Or may I not hope that the light hath ashamed your sleepiness and works of darkness, and that you are grieved at the heart for the sinful negligence of heart and life, and resolved now to be new men? For God's sake resolve, sirs. What will you do? Waver not, but resolve! It is more than a thousand lives that lieth on your resolution. I come to you this day as the minister of the great Pastor of the flock, that spake these words, not only to acquaint you, if you know not, or to remember you if you know, that one thing is needful; but also with authority to command you in his name, to value it, to love it, to choose it, to seek it, and labour for it as the one thing needful. What say you, will you or will you not? This unspeakable mercy I offer you from the Lord. He is willing to put up at your hands all that is past, and to lay all your sins on the score of Christ, and freely to forgive you through the virtue of his blood, if you will now at last be-

think you better, and come to Christ, and live as men that know what they have to do. If you will but see your former folly, and heartily bewail it, and set your hearts on the one thing needful, he will encourage you, and help you, and bid you welcome, and number you with his sons, though you have lived as his enemies. Though you have lived like swine and serpents, he will put you in his bosom, if you will but be washed and changed by his grace. Though you have set more by your worldly riches than by his glory, and have set more by the favour of mortal man, than by his favour, and though you have set more by your bellies, and your brutish pleasures, and little toys, than you have done by everlasting life, he will yet be merciful to you, and put up all these indignities at your hands, and take you into his dearest love, if you will but now become new creatures, and give your hearts to him that made them, and seek that first that is worth the finding, and lose not the rest of your lives and labour upon unprofitable things. What can you say against this offer? Is it not inconceivable and unspeakable mercy? O what would the damned give another day for such an offer? O what would you yourselves give another day for such an offer, if you now neglect it? What say you then, will you accept of this offer of mercy while it may be had, and close with grace, while grace would save you, or will you not? As ever you look for mercy in the hour of your distress when nothing but mercy can stand your souls in any stead, take mercy now while it may be had. Refuse it not when it is offered you, as you would not be refused by it when hell and desperation would devour you. If you slight it because it is free, you slight it because it is great, and therefore greatly to be valued. Think not hereafter to have it at your beck, if you neglect it now when it seeks for your acceptance. Do not say, I will a little longer keep my sins, and a little longer enjoy my pleasures, for I can have Christ's offer at any time before I die. O little dost thou know what a stab such a trifling purpose may give to the very heart of all thy hopes and happiness! and how terribly God may make thee know how ill he taketh thy unthankfulness and contempt! and how dear one other week of sinful pleasure may cost thy soul! In the name of God I warn you, do not so despise everlasting happiness! Do not so trample on the blood of Christ, if you would be saved by it!

Do not abuse the Spirit of grace, if you would be sanctified by it! Play not any longer with the consuming fire, the wrath of a jealous and Almighty God! Jest not with damnation! Though grace be now offered you, it will not be at your command. Despise this motion, and you may be out of hearing before the next. What can you expect, if you will slight such mercy, but either that death should shortly bring you to your reckoning, or that God should leave you to yourselves, and give you up to the hardness of your hearts. And if you will needs choose the world, and fleshly pleasure, and God and glory shall be thus contemptuously passed by, you may take your choice, and see what you will get by it. But remember what an offer you had this day, and that heaven was once within your reach, and that it might have been yours for ever if you would.

But because I am loath to leave you so, I will try by some such arguments as the reason of man must needs approve, Whether yet you may not be brought to yourselves, and yield to grace that you may be saved. And they shall be the arguments that lie before you here in the text.

1. Remember, it is necessity that is pleaded with you in my text. One thing is necessary. Necessity, and your own necessity, is such an argument, as one would think of itself should turn the scales, and fully resolve you, and put you past any further deliberation or delay. If necessity, your own necessity, and so great necessity to so great an end, will not prevail with you, what will? Necessity is that '*ingens telum*,' that natural reason taketh to be irresistible. Men think they may do almost any thing, if they can say necessity commandeth it. '*Omnem legem frangit, magnum illud humanæ imbecillitatis patrociniū*,' saith Seneca. What is it that necessity seemeth not sufficient to justify with the most? And we will grant the argument to be undeniable, if it be from absolute necessity indeed, and if men will not dream that it is more necessary to be rich, or honourable, or to live, than to be holy, and to be blessed with God, and to please him that created them. '*Ubi necessitas incumbit, non ultra disputandum est, sed celerrimè et fortiter agendum*.' Words signify nothing against necessity. Reason is but hindering, troublesome folly, when it pleadeth against necessity. '*Omni arte, omni ratione efficacior necessitas*. Curt.' In worldly matters how quick-sighted,

how resolute, how active is necessity ! What conquerable difficulties will it not overcome ! what labour will it not endure, if it have but the encouragement of hope ! And yet this necessity is indeed no true necessity at all. For that which is necessity but to my credit, or estate, or health, or life, can be no more necessary than is my credit, and estate, and health, and life itself. When men do but fancy a necessity where there is none, yet that will carry them through thick and thin. But O sirs, you have a real, undeniable necessity to be holy, and to set yourselves to the work of your salvation ; such a necessity as is founded in your nature, and laid on you by your Maker, and as all the true reason in the world will confess, to be indispensable necessity.

‘ *Faxis ut libeat quod est necesse.*

Make no more words then, but resolve and stir when it is a matter that must be done. It is pity and shame that the amiableness of God and holiness will not prevail with you of themselves. But if you cannot yet perceive them to be delectable, acknowledge them to be necessary. Be ashamed that pretended necessity for the body should be more powerful with others, than real necessity for salvation is with you. Look upon almost all the travail and labour that is under the sun, and all the diligence that is used here in the world, and consider whether it be not a thousandfold smaller necessity than I am now pleading with you, that setteth almost all on work ? The rich will not toil and labour, but will take their ease, because they think they are under no necessity ; but the poor will labour, because they must. Though the command of God to rich and poor should make them equally diligent in their several callings, in obedience to their Creator ; yet many thousands that labour all the year in obedience to their own necessities, would soon give it over and take ease, if they could but be well maintained without it, notwithstanding the commands of God. And the poor that reproach the rich for idleness, would be idle themselves if they were but rich. The tradesman followeth his trade, and the husbandman his hard labour all the year, and what reason will they give you, if you ask them why they do it, but this, ‘ We cannot live else. We must do it to maintain ourselves and families.’ And is not the reason

a thousand times stronger for our souls? May we not better say, 'We must please God, and set our hearts on the life to come, and mind and seek the one thing needful, whatever becomes of other things; for we cannot live else; we cannot be saved else.'

Necessity makes the traveller trudge from morning till night; and the carrier to follow his horses through fair and foul from year to year. It makes some dig into the bowels of the earth, in mines and coal-pits; and some to hale barges; and some to cut through the terrible ocean, and venture their lives among the raging waves and storms; and some even to beg their bread in rags from door to door. And O what will not necessity do that can be done? And yet how many thousands trifle or do nothing for their souls, as if there were no necessity of being saved; or no necessity of being holy that we may be saved. When alas, all the necessity in the world is no necessity at all, in comparison of this. You must beg, or starve, or famish, if you do not work. But you must burn in hell, if with fear and diligence you work not out your own salvation; (for all that it is God that worketh in you.) Phil. ii. 12. You must lie in prison if your debts be not paid. But you will be cast into outer darkness, if by the pardon of your sins, you be not discharged from your debt to God. You may become beggars if you be idle in your callings. But you will be the prisoners of hell, and shut out of all the happiness of the saints, if you labour not for the food that doth not perish, and strive not to enter in at the strait gate, and give not diligence to make your calling and election sure; John vi. 27. Matt. vii. 13. Luke xiii. 24. 2 Pet. i. 10. You must suffer hunger and nakedness if you have not food and raiment. But you must suffer everlastingly the wrath of God, if you have not the one thing necessary. You will be the scorn and laughingstock of men, if you fall under their contempt, and lose your honour. But you will be the enemies of God, and hated by him, if you continue to contemn his grace.

O had you but seen the life to come, you would say, there is a necessity of attaining it! Had you been one hour in hell, you would think that there is a necessity of escaping it, and that there is no necessity to this.

What say you to all this? Is it not of truth and weight? Can you deny it? Or should you make light of it? None

but an infidel can deny it; and none but a deadhearted sinner can make light of it. Believe the word of God, and the truth of it will be past question with you. Consider but that you are men that have immortal souls, and the weight of it will appear inestimable to you; above contempt; above neglect. Believe it, sirs, you may as well see without light, and be supported without earth, or live without food, as be saved without holiness, or happy without the one thing necessary; Heb. xii. 14. John iii. 3. 5. Matt. xviii. 3. And when this is resolved of by God, and established as his standing law, and he hath told it you so oft and plainly, for any man now to say, 'I will yet hope for better; I hope to be saved on easier terms, without all this ado,' is no better than to set his face against the God of heaven, and instead of believing God, to believe the contradiction of his own ungodly heart; and to hope to be saved whether God will or not; and to give the lie to his Creator, under the pretence of trust and hope. It is indeed to hope for impossibilities. To be saved without holiness, is to see without eyes, and to live without life. And who is so foolish as to hope for this? Few of you are so unreasonable as to hope for a crop at harvest, without ploughing or sowing; or for a house without building; or for strength without eating and drinking; or to sleep and play, when you have nothing to maintain your families, and say, You hope that God will maintain both you and them. And yet this were a far wiser kind of hope, than to hope to be saved without the one thing necessary to salvation; and without a heart that is set upon it, and a life that is employed for it. It is the Holy Ghost that calleth you to answer the question, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" If you know how, then enter the lists with God, and dispute the cause with him. How will you escape, if you be neglecters of the only way that he hath provided for your escape? Is there any power or interest of men or angels that can procure your escape? How can that be done, that God hath resolved shall not be?

I beseech you now, beloved hearers, to remember this urgent motive of necessity, and use it when you are tempted to delay or trifle about the business of your salvation, as if it were some indifferent, needless thing. Without worldly riches you may be rich in faith: without worldly honours, you may have the honour of being the sons of God; and

without worldly pleasures, or health, or life, you may have the favour of God and life eternal. But without the one thing needful, you have nothing that is durably or satisfactorily good, but are undone for ever. Without the things of the world, you live in want for a little while, and then you will be equal to the greatest princes. But without this one thing, you must live in endless woe and misery, and be far worse than the basest prisoner in the dungeon, or than the toads and vermin that lie in the most unclean holes or sinks of the earth. And yet dare you delay another day before you make so necessary a change? You have hearts of stone, if your own necessity thus urged upon your consideration will not awake you. If your hearts were not dead within you, while you hear these things, one would think such a necessity should make you feel, and resolve upon a speedy change, and make you stir in the diligent performance. Can you go on in security, in negligence, and worldliness, when you hear of your necessity, that you must change, or you are lost for ever? O stupid souls, that will not be moved with necessity of everlasting consequence! O what hath God, or Christ, or heaven, or holiness done against these men, that will rather lie in hell for ever, than they will live in the love and service of this God, and in the practice of holiness, and in the hopes of heaven! How meet are they for hell, that will venture upon it deliberately and upon choice, to escape the trouble of living in the holy love, delight, and service of the ever blessed God! that is, to escape the trouble of heaven. Is it so great a sin to shut up the bowels of compassion against our brother in his need? And it is not more unnatural to deny compassion to yourselves in your own necessity, and in the greatest necessity? O poor sinners, remember your necessities! Your own, your great, your absolute necessities. When you hear men that gather alms cry, ‘Remember the poor,’ doth it make thee think, What a poor, necessitous soul have I to remember? As Paul saith of preaching to others, I may say much more to you, of minding and practising this great work of your salvation; “Necessity is laid upon you, and woe to you if you do it not;” 1 Cor. ix. 16. Woe to you that ever you were born, and that ever you were reasonable creatures, or rather, that ever you so abused your reason, if you neglect and miss of the one thing necessary.

I know you have other wants to be supplied, and other matters to look after in the world. But alas, how small are they ! God will supply all your other wants, if you will first and faithfully look after this ; Phil. iv. 19. Matt. vi. 33. 1 Pet. v. 7. Or if life and all go, you will find all in heaven. But if you miss of this one thing, nothing in the world can make supply, or do you good. And though now your feelings tell you not these things, alas how quickly will God make you feel, and teach you by that sensible way that you would needs be taught by !

Awake then, you sluggish, careless souls ! Your house over your heads is on a flame ! The hand of God is lifted up ! If you love yourselves, prevent the stroke. Vengeance is at your backs. The wrath of God pursueth your sin ; and woe to you if he find it upon you when he overtaketh you : Away with it speedily. Up and be gone, return to God ; make Christ and mercy your friend in time, if you love your lives. The Judge is coming ; for all that you have heard of it so long, still you believe it not. You shall shortly see the Majesty of his appearance, and the dreadful glory of his face, and yet do you not begin to look about you, and to make ready for such a day ? Yea, before that day, your separated souls shall begin to reap as you have sowed here. Though now the partition that stands between you and the world to come, do keep unbelievers strange to the things that most concerneth them, yet death will quickly find a portal to let you in ; and then sinners, you will find such doings there as you little thought of, or at least did sensibly regard on earth. Before your corpse can be wrapped up in your winding-sheets, you will see and feel that which will tell you to the quick, that one thing was necessary. If you do die without this one thing necessary, before your friends can have finished your funerals, your souls will have taken up their places among the devils in endless torment and despair ; and all the wealth, and honour, and pleasure, that the world afforded you, will not ease you. This is sad, but it is true, sirs, for God hath spoken it.

Up therefore, and bestir you for the life of your souls ! Necessity will awake the sluggard. Necessity, we say, will break stone walls. The proudest will stoop when they perceive necessity. The most slothful will bestir them when

they feel necessity. The most careless will look about them and be industrious in necessity. Necessity is called the tyrant of the world, that can make men do any thing that is possible to be done. And yet cannot necessity make you cast away your sins, and take up a holy and heavenly life? Necessity will make men fare hard, and work hard, and travel hard; go bare, and suffer much; yea it will even cut off a leg or arm to save their lives. And yet can it not prevail with reasonable creatures, to cast away the poison of a fruitless, filthy, deceitful sin, and to be up and doing for their salvation! O poor souls! Is there, think you, a greater necessity of your sin than of your salvation? and of pleasing your flesh for a little time, than of pleasing the Lord, and escaping everlasting misery? I beseech you consider your own necessities.

2. Consider also, that it is but one thing which God hath made necessary for you. And I shewed you before, how that the means themselves, though they are many, have a certain unity in their harmony and connexion, and as they centre in the ultimate end, which is one. If God had sent you upon such a multitude of errands as the flesh and the world doth, and set you on such disagreeing, contrary works, then you had been excusable if you had neglected some of them. But he hath sent you but upon one errand; even to seek and make sure of everlasting life; and therefore if you neglect this one, you are inexcusable. If the world be divided into a thousand opinions, or go a thousand several ways, they may thank themselves, who are the authors of this confusion; but God is no cause of it, or friend to it. He hath made them but one work, and set them but one way to heaven, and given them one Master, Jesus Christ, to teach that way; and written but one law, even his holy Scripture, to be their sure and constant guide. And if men would stick to this one Master, and not make flesh and blood their master, or the multitude their master, or the rulers of the world, or the custom of their forefathers the master of their faith; and if they would stick to this one word of God, and not run after the traditions of men, they would not be in such a maze, nor of so many minds as now they are. But they do in their doctrines as they do in their practice. God hath marked them out but one way in the holy Scripture, which is the good and the sure way, the way that Peter and Paul,

and the rest of the apostles went to heaven in, and this way will not serve men's turns, but will run a hundred ways instead of this one : and they must make new ways which the apostles of Christ were never acquainted with.

If God had loaded your memories with many things you might possibly have said, we cannot remember them all ; but he hath set you finally but one thing to remember, even to lay hold on everlasting life, and press on to the crown that is set before you : and he hath an ill memory that cannot remember one thing, and such a thing as this too.

It may be you are ignorant and cannot learn many things ; but God hath set you but this one thing to learn as of absolute necessity : and he is dull indeed that cannot learn one thing, and such a thing too. If you cannot understand the depths of sciences, nor reach the height of learning that others do attain, yet learn this one thing, to know God in the Redeemer ; and if you know this, you know all. Paul was not only contented with this knowledge, but "resolved to know nothing else but Christ and him crucified ;" that is, nothing that is wholly alien to this : nothing but what doth keep its due subordination to this, and so may be reduced to the knowledge of Christ ; 1 Cor. ii. 2. He would not own any other knowledge as knowledge, but disclaimeth it as ignorance and foolishness, though it seemed wisdom in the eyes of the world : chap. iii. 19. This seeming knowledge and wisdom of the world, that is totally disjunct from Christ, is part of the all that we must sell to buy the pearl, if we will obtain it ; Matt. xiii. 46. And part of the "all things" which Paul accounted dung and loss, that he might "win Christ and be found in him ;" Phil. iii. 7—10. For they that know not this one thing, know nothing, whatsoever they may seem to know : and they that would go beyond the knowledge of Christ, and think it too low for them, and trouble their brains, and the church with their speculations, they do not know indeed, but dream. And if they would see their faces in the glass of Scripture, 1 Tim. vi. 4. "They are proud, knowing nothing, but doating about questions and strifes of words ; whence cometh envy, railing, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth."

Moreover, if your strength be so small that it will not

suffice for every thing, at least you should lay it out on this one thing.

Your time, I know, is small, your lives are short, and therefore you may say, We have not time for many things; but when you have but one thing given you to do, that must be done, you may sure find time for this, for which you have your time.

If you set your servant to work, and bid him be sure to do one thing, whatever else he do, you will not take it well if that one shall be neglected. If you send him on an errand, and bid him be sure to remember one thing whatsoever he forget, you will not take it well if he forget that one. If you trust him but with one thing, and bid him be sure to keep that one, you will not take it well if that be lost; especially if he wilfully throw it away.

O consider whether this be not your case. God hath sent you into this world but on one errand, even to make sure of everlasting life, and will you neglect that one? He hath trusted you with one thing, and will you cast away that one? He hath given you one lesson to learn, even to please him and to save your souls, and will you not learn and remember that one. If you had forgot your food and raiment, or forgot the houses you dwell in, it had been a small matter in comparison; but to forget that one work that must be done, that one friend that you must always trust to, that one place that you must live in for ever, this is most unreasonable; and when you have recovered your understandings, you shall confess it to be so.

3. Consider further, that this one thing is that good part: you see it is here called so. "Mary hath chosen that good part—." Other things seem good to sense, and to perverted reason that is blinded by sense; but this is it that seemeth good to reason illuminated by the spirit of faith. Other things seem good for a while, but this is that good that will still be good.

I may not only say, that the good of other things is small in comparison of this, but that it is nothing at all, but as it is related unto this. This is that good that makes all things else good that are good. As they come from God, and reveal God to us, and lead us up to God, and are means to this eternal life, so they are good; but otherwise there is no goodness in them.

And therefore, seeing that goodness is naturally the object of man's will, one would think you should quickly be resolved of your choice. Sensual good is but a nominal good, if it reach not higher. All that you hunt after so eagerly in the world, is nothing but real vanity and vexation, a shadow of good, a picture of profit, a dream of delight, which one frown of God will turn into astonishing horror and despair: like a tender flower that is nipt with one frosty night, or withered with one scorching day: but it is only this one thing, that is the solid, substantial, and enduring good. The pleasure of the flesh is a good that is common to men with brutes; they can eat, and drink, and play, and satisfy their lusts, and master one another as well as you. But it is the spiritual good that is proper to a reasonable creature. The pleasure of the flesh may melt you into foolish mirth, and make you like drunken men, that are gallant fellows in their own eyes, while sober men are ashamed of them, or pity them, or they become a laughingstock to others. But it is this one thing only which is that good which wisdom itself will justify. A man that is tickled may laugh more than he that is possessed of a kingdom, or hath the desires of his heart; but he is not therefore to be accounted the happier man, nor will any wise man so account him. O sirs, one would think that to men that have read and heard what we have done, and have had that experience which we have had, these things should be plain and past all question; and that spiritual, heavenly, everlasting things should be confessed by us all to be that good part that should possess all the fervent desires of the soul.

But O that we could see the truth of this belief in the choice of your wills, and the drift of your endeavours! If God would open your eyes and shew you things as they are, and save you from your wilful blindness, you would then see which is the better part, and you would be ashamed that ever you should make any question of it. That is the good part, which beareth the most lively image of God, which is goodness itself, yea, which possesseth us of this good. That is the good part which will make us good, and not that which deceiveth us and makes us worse. That is the good part which the wisest and best men judge to be so, yea, which God himself doth judge to be so; and not that

which the most blind, deluded sinners do judge the best. That is the good part which is best at last, and which is an enduring good, and not that which perisheth in the using, and flieth from us when we have greatest need. That is the good part which all men will say is good in the conclusion; which the wicked themselves, that are now of another mind, will confess at last to be the best; and not that which is commended only in prosperity, while the frensy or dream of sensuality doth beguile men, and which they will all cry out against at last. If you would know which is the best part, take counsel of God, and see what he saith, and ask men of wisdom and of greatest experience, that have tried both, and men that have staid the end, and seen what fleshly pleasures, and profits, and honours can do for them: for how can men make so true a judgment that do not either stay the end, or else foresee the end by faith? Do not take their judgments that are drunk with their sensual delights, and that will confess they must repent themselves, and therefore confess they must be of another mind. Take not their judgments that neither have seen, nor yet foresee the end; the worst is yet to come with them. Their states and minds are near a change. The day is near when they will say, that heaven was the better part, and be convinced by punishment, that would not be convinced by instruction.

Surely, sirs, it is so easy a question to reason itself, where sin hath not blinded it, whether God or the world be the better part, that one would think there should be left no room for doubting. Dare any of you speak out and say, that earth is better than heaven, or sin than grace, or temporal pleasure than eternal happiness? I think you dare not. Shame will forbid you, and conscience will contradict you, if you should say so. And will you commend God by your words, and discommend him by your lives? Will you say heaven is best, and yet seek the world before it; and not let it have the best of your affections and endeavours? Shall it be highest in your mouths, and lowest in your hearts and lives? Shall it have the first place in your prayers, and the last in your labours? Why then you commend God but to his dishonour, and your condemnation. You extol heaven and heavenly things but to the confusion of your own faces, that your own confessions may be brought in hereaf-

ter as witnesses against you. In the name of God therefore I charge you, if you know which is the better part, condemn not yourselves by making choice against your knowledge.

4. Consider also, that this good part is offered you, and you have your choice, whether God or the world, whether heaven or earth shall be your portion.

It is not purchasing, or proper meriting, but choosing the good part, that you are called to. It is not, Mary hath purchased or merited the better part, but, hath chosen the better part.

Two things are here contained. (1.) That it is not matter of impossibility that you are called to: you are not excluded from the hopes of salvation, by any exceptions that God hath put in against you in his promises; but it is conditionally made as well to you as to others.

(2.) And the condition is not any thing unreasonable, but your own consent. Christ and salvation are offered to your choice. If you will but prefer them before the trifles of the world, you may have them. The door of grace is open to you as well as to others. If you will but enter you may live. You are not left in a remediless case, nor given over to desperation. You cannot say, 'Repenting and believing will do us no good; we cannot have Christ though we were never so willing.' You cannot say, 'We would fain have Christ and his Spirit to sanctify us, but we cannot; we are willing to be his disciples, but he is not willing to accept us, and to be our Saviour.' You cannot say so, and say truly. You cannot say he is set to sale to you, and that he expecteth such a price as you are unable to give; for you are called to take him freely; and though this be sometimes called buying, yet it is "a buying without money and without price;" Isa. lv. 1—4. And though you must "sell all you have" for this valuable pearl (Matt. xiii. 46.), yet that is but a metaphorical selling, a parting with your sin and fleshly pleasure, as troubles and impediments that would keep you from salvation. As a sick man sells his diseases for health; or at least, as he hath health by forbearing some hurtful things that please him; or as a prisoner purchaseth the liberty that is freely given him, by consenting to come forth and cast off his fetters. Your hands are full of dirt, and God offers you gold, and you cannot receive it till you throw away the dirt. This is your

purchase. You give God nothing as a valuable price for his mercy, but you throw away the sin that is inconsistent with your happiness. Still I shall tell you, you may have Christ if you will. Pleasures and profits are flattering you to your destruction, and God calls you from them, and offereth you his Son and everlasting life, and entreateth you to accept them. And here you have your choice. The offer is, "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely;" Rev. xxii. 17. And if you will but choose that happiness that is offered you, and Christ the way to that happiness, all the world cannot bereave you of your choice. It is brought to your hand and urged on you. You have now your choice, whether you will have Christ or the flesh, grace or sin, heaven or hell. As you choose, so you shall have. And if you miss of life, it will be because you did not choose it. Even because you "would not come to Christ that you might have life" (John v. 40.), and "would not have him to rule over you" (Luke xix. 27.), and "would not have the Lord indeed for your God" (Psal. lxxxi. 11.), and "did not choose the fear of the Lord" (Prov. i. 29.); yea, when "Christ would have gathered you, would not be gathered;" Matt. xxiii. 37. It is this "turning away of the simple that doth slay them, because they refuse when Christ calls them, and regard not when he stretcheth forth his hand, but set at naught his counsel, and will have none of his reproof;" Prov. i. 24, 25. 32. See therefore that you refuse not him that speaketh; for if you turn away from him that speaks from heaven, and neglect or make light of so great salvation, how do you think it possible you should escape? Heb. xii. 25. ii. 3. Matt. xxii. 5.

But perhaps some of you will think to excuse yourselves for want of freewill, and say, 'How is it in our choice, when God must give us to will and to do? and we can do nothing of ourselves? Have we freewill or power to choose the better part? You must not set up the power or will of man too high.'

Ans. No; it is you that would set up your wills too high, in making us believe that you are not wilfully ungodly and impenitent, but omit all the good, and do all the evil that you do, because you cannot help it. You cannot but know that he is the sinner to be blamed and punished, that can and will not, rather than he that would but cannot do

good, and forbear the contrary. You know that it is wilfulness, and not unwilling impotency that the venom of malice and naughtiness lieth in ; and therefore you are excusing your wills, and laying all upon your impotency, which is but to excuse your faults. I would make you know the baseness of your wills, and that it is long of your badness that you are like to be undone, if grace prevent it not by your thorough conversion. I do not say that you have any power but what you have from God ; but I say you have the natural and legal power, and more than power, even a grant and offer of such a mercy from God. You have human faculties, and leave, and offers, and entreaties ; and you may have Christ and life as he is offered if you will. When I say it is in your choice, I do not say that you have the wit or the heart to make a right choice. No ; if you had but so much wit and grace, I need not use all these words to you to persuade you to choose the better part. Your wills are free from any force that God puts upon them to determine them to sin ; or from any force that satan or any enemy you have can use to determine them to sin. All they can do is morally to entice you. God doth not make you sin. If you choose your death, and forsake your own mercy, it is not God that determineth your wills to make this choice. Yea, he commandeth, and persuadeth, and urgeth you to make a better choice. And though satan tempt you, he can do no more. You have so much power, that you may have Christ if you will. You cannot say, I am truly willing to have Christ, and cannot. Thus much freewill undoubtedly you have.

But I must confess that your wills are not free from the misguiding of a blinded mind, nor from the seduction of a sensual inclination ; nor from a base and wicked disposition of your own. This kind of freewill you shew us that you have not. But is your wickedness your excuse ? and is your wilfulness your innocency ? What then can be culpable ?

Sirs, I would not have you abuse God, and befool yourselves with names and words, saying, you have not power and freewill, as if you might thus excuse your sin. I have opened the matter in plain terms to you, that children may understand it, though learned men have endeavoured to obscure it. God giveth you your choice, though your own

wickedness do hinder you from choosing aright. You have a price in your hands, but fools have not a heart to their own good; Prov. xvii. 16. I know that you want both wisdom and a sanctified will; and I know that your minds and wills are contrarily disposed. You need not tell me that you are wilful and wicked, when there must be so many words spoken, and so many books written, and so much mercy and patience of God, and so many afflictions from his hand, and all will not serve to make you choose the better part. But if you were willing, if you were truly willing, the principal part of the work were done. For if you are willing, Christ is willing; and if Christ be willing, and you be willing, what can hinder your salvation?

Having laid this groundwork from the plain word of God, methinks I may with this advantage now plead the case, even with common reason. One thing is needful; the good part is that one; and this is tendered to you by the Lord. What is it then that you do make choice of? and what do you resolve? May you have Christ, and pardon, and everlasting life, and will you not have them? Shall it be said of you another day, that you had your choice, whether you would have Christ and life, or sin and death; and you chose destruction and refused life? I beseech thee, reader, whosoever thou art that readest these lines, that thou wouldst a little turn thine ears to God, and withdraw thyself from the delusions of the flesh and world, and use thy reason for thy everlasting peace; and consider with thyself what a dreadful thing it will be, if thou be everlastingly shut out of the presence of God, upon thy own choice? And if thou lose thy part in Christ, and pardon, and everlasting glory upon thy own choice. And if thou must lie in hell-fire, and conscience must tell thee there for ever, Thou hast but the fruit of thine own choice. Heaven was set open to me as well as others. I had life, and time, and teaching, and persuasions as well as others; but I chose the pleasure of sin for a season, though I was told and assured that hell would follow; and now I have that which I made choice of, and taste but the fruit of my own wilfulness! Will not such gripes of conscience be a hellish torment of themselves, and an intolerable vexation, if thou hadst no more? Had you rather have sin, than Christ and holiness? Alas, I see by your lives you had! But had you rather have hell than

God and glory? If not, then choose not the way to hell. Why do you give God such good words, and prefer your sin when you have done, before him? Why do you speak so well of Christ and heaven, and yet refuse them? Why do you speak so ill of sin and hell, and yet choose them to the loss of your salvation? Surely if you were soundly persuaded that Christ is better than the world, and holiness than sin, you would choose that which you say is the best. For that which men think indeed to be the best, and best for them, they will choose and seek after. And therefore, when you have said all that you can in commendation of grace and a holy life, no wise men will believe that you are heartily persuaded of the truth of what you say, as long as you run away from Christ, and follow the flesh, and take that course that is contrary to your profession. For that which you like best you will certainly choose and seek with the greatest care and diligence. Now you have your choice; if you would have the better part, now choose it.

5. I have one other motive yet from the text to persuade you to choose the better part. If you choose it, it shall never be taken from you. You hear this is the resolution of Christ himself concerning Mary's choice, and that which is spoken of her will be as true of you, if you make the same choice. If all the enemies you have in the world should endeavour to deprive you of Christ and your salvation, they cannot do it against your choice. If by power or by policy they would rob you of your portion, they cannot do it. For which way should they do it? They cannot turn the heart of God against you, nor make him break his covenant with you, nor repent him of his gift and calling which he hath extended to you. For he is unchangeable, and loveth you with an everlasting love; Mal. iii. 6. Jer. xxxi. 3. Isa. liv. 8. Jer. xxxiii. 20, 21, 23. 1. 5. Rom. xi. 29. They cannot undermine the rock that you are built upon, nor batter the fortress of your souls, nor overcome your great Preserver and defence, nor take you out of the hands of Christ; Psal. lxxiii. 26. xxxi. 2, 3. lxii. 2. lix. 9, 16. John x. 28. Cast not away the salvation that is offered you, and then never fear lest it be taken from you. See that you choose the better part, and resolvedly choose it, and it will be certainly your own for ever. For man cannot take it from you, nor devils cannot take it from you, and God will not take it

from you. Rust and moths will not corrupt this treasure ; nor can thieves break through and steal it from you ; Matt. vi. 19, 20.

But you cannot say so of worldly riches. If you choose to be lords and princes on the earth, you cannot have your choice ; but if you could, you cannot keep it. If you choose the wealth and credit of the world, and were sure to get it, you were as sure to leave it. For naked you came into the world, and naked you must go out ; Job i. 21. If you choose your ease, and mirth, and pleasure, these will be taken from you. If you choose the satisfying of your fleshly desires, and all the delight and prosperity that the world can afford you, yet all must be taken from you, yea quickly and easily taken from you. Alas ! one stroke of an apoplexy, or a few fits of a fever, or the breaking of a small vein, or many hundred of the like effectual means, are ready at the beck of God, to take you from all that you have gathered for your flesh. And then whose shall all these things be ? None of yours I am sure, nor will they redeem your souls from death or hell ; Luke xii. 20. Psal. xlix. 7. If you be in honour, you abide not in it, but are (as to your body) as the beasts that perish. If you think to perpetuate your houses and your names, this your way is but your folly, though your posterity go on to approve your sayings, and succeed you in your sins ; Psal. xlix. 11—13. “The worldly wise man doth perish with the fool : as sheep they are laid in the grave. Death shall feed on him, and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning ;” ver. 10. 14. “They shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb ;” Psal. xxxvii. 2. “I have seen the wicked in great prosperity, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree ; yet he passed away, and lo he was not ; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found ;” ver. 35, 36.

You think it a fine thing to have the fulness of the creature, to be esteemed with the highest, and fed and clothed with the best, and fare deliciously every day, as the rich man, Luke xvi. But hath he not paid dear, think you for his riches and pleasure by this time ? His feeding and fulness was quickly at an end ; but his torment is not yet ended, nor ever will be. You think it a brave thing to clamber up to riches, and that which you call greatness and honour in the world ; but how quickly, how terribly must you come

down! "Go into the sanctuary of God and understand your end. Surely God hath set them in slippery places, and casteth them down into destruction. How are they brought to desolation as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awakeneth, so at the awakening, shall their image (or shadow of honour) be despised;" Psal. lxxiii. 17—20.

How short is the pleasure, and how long is the pain! How short is the honour, and how long is the shame! What is it under the sun that is everlasting? You have friends, but will they dwell with you here for ever? You have houses, but how long will you stay in them? It is but as yesterday since your houses had other inhabitants, and your towns and countries other inhabitants, and where are they all now? You have health, but how soon will you consume in sickness? You have life, but how soon will it end in death? You have the pleasure of sin; you say unto yourselves, "Eat, drink, and be merry," but how soon will all the mirth be marred, and turned into sadness, everlasting sadness! When you hear, "Thou fool, this night shall they require thy soul, and then whose shall these things be?" Luke xii. 20.

O miserable wretch! If thou hadst chosen God instead of thy sin, and the everlasting kingdom instead of this world, thou wouldst not have been thus cast off in thy extremity. God would have stuck better to thee. Heaven would have proved a more durable inheritance. For it is a "kingdom that cannot be moved;" Heb. xii. 28. The day is near when thy despairing soul must take up this lamentation, 'My dearest friends are now forsaking me. I must part with all that I laboured for, and delighted in. I have drunk up all my part in pleasure, and there is no more left. My merry company, and honours, and recreations are past and gone; I shall eat, and drink, and sport no more. But God would not have used me thus, if I had set my heart upon him and his kingdom. O that I had chosen him and made him my portion, and spent these thoughts, and cares, and labours, for the obtaining of his love, and promised glory, which I spent in the pleasing and providing for the flesh; then I should have had a happiness that death could not deprive me of, and a crown that fadeth not away. Neither life, nor death, nor any creature could have separated me from his love. I need not then have gone out of the world as a pri-

soner out of the gaol, to the bar, and to the place of execution. My departing soul should not then need to have been afraid of falling into the hands of an unreconciled God, and so into the hands of the devils as his executioners, nor of passing out of the flesh to hell.'

O poor sinners, for how short a pleasure do you sell your hopes of everlasting blessedness, and run yourselves into endless pains! O what comparison is there between the time of your pleasure, and the everlastingness of your punishment! How short a while is the cup at your mouths or the drink in your bellies! or the harlot in your embraces! or the wealth of the world in your possession! And how long a time must you pay for this in hell! How quickly are your merry hours past! but your torments will never be past. When your corpses are laid in the grave, men can say, 'Now he hath done his satisfying the flesh and following the world,' but never man can truly say, 'Now he hath done suffering for it.' Your life of sin is passing as a dream, and your honours as a shadow, and all your business as a tale that is told; but the life of glory which you rejected for this, would have endured for evermore. Suppose as many thousand years as there are sands on the sea, or piles of grass on the whole earth, or hairs on the heads of all the men in the world, yet when these many are past, the joy of the saints, and the torments of the wicked are as far from an end as ever they were. The eternal God doth give them a duration, and make them eternal.

When our joys are at the sweetest, this thought must needs be part of that sweetness, that their sweetness shall never have an end. If our short foretaste be joy unspeakable and full of glory, what shall we call that joy which flows from the most perfect fruition and perpetuation? 1 Pet. i. 7, 8. We have joy here, but alas how seldom! alas, how small in comparison of what we may there expect! Some joy we have, but how oft do melancholy, or crosses, or losses in the world, or temptations, or sins, or desertions interrupt it! Our sun is here most commonly under a cloud, and too often in an eclipse; and we have the night as often as the day. Yea, our state is usually a winter; our days are cold and short, and our nights are long. But when the flourishing state of glory comes, we shall have no intermissions nor eclipses. "The path of the just is as the shining light,

that shineth more and more unto the perfect day ;” Prov. iv. 18. And the perfect day is a perpetual day, that knows no interruption by the darkness of the night. “ For there shall be no night there, nor need of candle or sun ; for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever ;” Rev. xxii. 5. This is the life that fears no death, and this is the feast that fears no want or future famine ; the pleasure that knows nor fears pain ; the health that knows nor fears sickness ; this is the treasure that fears no moth, or rust, or thief ; the building that fears no storm nor decay ; the kingdom that fears no changes by rebellion ; the friendship that fears no falling out ; the love that fears no hatred or frustration ; the glory that fears no envious eye ; the possessed inheritance that fears no ejection by fraud, or force, or any failings ; the joy that feels or fears no sorrow ; while God who is life itself is our life ; and while God who is love, is the fountain and object of our love, we can never want either life or love. And whilst he feeds our love, our joyful praises will never be run dry, nor ever go out for want of fuel. This is the true perpetual motion, the circulation of the holy blood and spirit from God to man, and from man to God. Being prepared and brought near him, we have the blessed vision of his face, by seeing him ; and by the blessed emanation of his love, we are drawn out perpetually and unweariedly to love him and rejoice in him ; and from hence incessantly to praise and honour him. In all which, as his blessed image and the shining reflections of his revealed glory, he taketh complacency, which is the highest end of God and man, and the very term of all his works and ways.

I thought here to have ended this first part of my discourse ; but yet compassion calls me back. I fear lest with the most I have not prevailed ; and lest I shall leave them behind me in the bonds of their iniquity. I daily hear the voice of men possessed by a spirit of uncleanness, speaking against this necessity of a holy life, which Christ himself so peremptorily asserteth. I hear that voice which foretelleth a more dreadful voice, if in time they be not prevailed with to prevent it. One saith, ‘ What need all this ado ? This strictness is more ado than needs.’ Another saith, ‘ You would make men mad, by poring so much on matters that are above them.’ Another saith, ‘ Cannot you keep your religion to yourself ; and be godly with moderation, as

your neighbours be?' Another saith, 'I hope God is more merciful than to damn all that be not so precise.' Another saith, 'I shall never endure so strict a life, and therefore I will venture as well as others.' The sum of all is, they are so far in love with the world and sin, and so much against a holy life, that they will not be persuaded to it; and therefore to quiet their consciences in their misery, they make themselves believe that they may be saved without it, and that it is a thing of no necessity, but their coming to church and living like good neighbours may serve the turn without it, for their salvation. And thus doth the malicious serpent, in the hearts of those that he possesseth, rise up against the words of Christ. Christ saith that this is the one thing needful. And the serpent saith, It is more ado than needs; and What needs all this ado? Though I have fully answered this ungodly objection already in my "Treatise of Conversion;" and more fully in my "Treatise of Rest," part 3. chap. 6; yet I shall once more fall upon it. For death is coming, while poor deluded souls are loitering; and if satan, by such senseless reasonings as these, can keep them unready in their sin, till the fatal stroke hath cut them down, and cast them into endless, easeless fire, alas, how great will be their fall! and how unspeakably dreadful will be their misery! Whoever thou be, whether high or low, learned or unlearned, that hast disliked, opposed, or reproached serious, godly Christians, as Puritans, and too precise; and that thinkest the most diligent labour for salvation to be but more ado than needs, and hast not thyself yet resolvedly set upon a holy life, I require at thy hands so much impartiality and faithfulness to thy own immortal soul, as seriously to peruse these following Questions, and to go no further in thy careless, negligent, ungodly course, till thou art able to give such a rational answer to them, as thou darest stand to now at the bar of thine own conscience, and hereafter at the bar of Christ.

Quest. 1. 'Canst thou possibly give God more than is his due? or love him more than he deserveth? or serve him more faithfully than thou art bound, and he is worthy of?' Art thou not his creature, made of nothing? and hast thou not all that thou art and hast from him? and if thou give him all, dost thou give him any more than what is his own? If thou give him all the affections of thy soul, and all the

most serious thoughts of thy heart, and every hour of thy time, and every word of thy mouth, and every penny of thy wealth (in the way that he requireth it), is it any more than is his due? Should not he have all, that is Lord of all?

Quest. 2. ‘Is it not the first and great commandment, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and might?”’ And do not heathens confess this by the light of nature? And hath not thy tongue confessed it many a time? And doth not thy conscience yet bear witness that it is thy duty? And is it possible thou shouldst thus love him, with all thy heart, and soul, and might, and yet not seek and serve him with all thy heart, and soul, and might? or can the most sanctified person do any more, if he were perfect?

Quest. 3. ‘Dost thou not confess that we are all sinners? And that the best is still too bad? And that he that loveth and serveth God most, doth yet come exceeding short of his duty?’ And yet wouldst thou have such men come shorter? and darest thou persuade them to do less? Must not the best confess their daily failings, and beg pardon for them from the Lord, and be beholden to the blood of Christ, and lament their imperfections? And yet wouldst thou have them be such odious hypocrites, as to think they serve God too much already, while they confess that they come so short? Shall they confess their failings, and reproach those that endeavour to avoid the like? Shall the same tongue say, ‘Lord be merciful to me a sinner,’ and ‘Lord, I am good enough already. What need there so much ado to please and serve thee any better?’ What would you think of such a man?

Quest. 4. ‘Is it not an unquestionable duty to grow in grace? and to press towards perfection as men that have not yet attained it?’ 2 Pet. iii. 18. Phil. iii. 12—14. And must Paul, and Peter, and the holiest on earth, still seek to grow and labour to be more holy? and shall such a one say, ‘What need I be more holy?’ that are utterly unsanctified.

Quest. 5. ‘Is it not one of the two grand principles of faith and all religion, without which no one can please God?’ Heb. xi. 6. Whoever cometh to God must believe first that God is; (that there is a God, most powerful, wise and good). Secondly, that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek

him. This is one of nature's principles. It is the diligent seekers of God that he will reward. And yet dare a fleshly, negligent sinner reproach the diligent seeking of God, and take it for a needless thing, and say, 'What needs all this ado?' Are not these the atheist's seconds; even next to them that deny that there is any God, or that blaspheme him? And indeed, if he be not worthy of all the love and service that thou canst give him, he is not the true God! Consider therefore the tendency of thy words, and tremble.

Quest. 6. 'Doth not that wretch set up the flesh and the world above the Lord, that thinks not most of his thoughts, and cares, and words, and time, and labour for the world to be too much ado, and yet thinks less for God and heaven to be too much?' And dost thou think in thy conscience that the flesh is better worthy of thy love, and care, and labour, than the Lord? Or that earth will prove a better reward to thee than heaven? Who, thinkest thou, will have the better bargain in the end? The fool that laid up riches for himself, and was not rich to God, and shall lose all at once that he so much valued, and so carefully sought (Luke xii. 20, 21.), or he that laid up his treasure in heaven, and there set his heart, and sought for the never-fading crown? (Matt. vi. 20, 21. 33.) and counted all as loss and dung for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ? Phil. iii. 8. Do you think that there is any thing more worth your care, and time, and labour, or can you more profitably lay it out?

Quest. 7. 'Have you not immortal souls to save or lose?' And are not your bodies for their service, and to be used and ruled by them? And should not your souls then have more of your care and diligence, than corruptible flesh that must turn to dirt?

Quest. 8. 'Dare any one of you say that you are wiser than the all-knowing God?' Is not thy wisdom less to his, than a glowworm's light is to the sun? And hath not God most plainly and frequently in his word commanded thee a holy life? Yea every part and parcel of it is nothing else but the obeying of that word; for if it be not prescribed by the Lord, it is not holiness, nor that which I am pleading for. And when the living God hath told the world his mind and will, shall a sinful man stand up and say, 'I am wiser than my Maker; I know a better way than this; what need there all this stir for heaven?' What dost thou less than

thus blaspheme, and set up thy folly above the Lord, when thou condemnest or reproachest holiness which he commandeth ?

Quest. 9. ‘ Dare you say that God is not only so unwise, but so unrighteous and tyrannical, as to give the world unnecessary laws, and set them upon a needless work ?’ What king so tyrannical as would require his subjects on pain of death to go pick straws against the wind ? What master or parent so foolishly cruel as to command their servants or children, to weary themselves with hunting butterflies, and following their own shadows ? And darest thou impute such foolish tyranny to the God of heaven, as if he had made a world, and set them upon a needless work, and commanded them to tire themselves in vain ?

Quest. 10. ‘ Can a man be too diligent about that work which he was made for, and is daily preserved and maintained for, and for which he hath all the mercies of his life ?’ Thou hadst never come into the world but on this business, even to serve and please God, and prepare for everlasting happiness. And are you afraid of doing this too diligently ? Why is it, thinkest thou, that God sustaineth thee ? Why diedest thou not many years ago, but only that thou mightest have time to seek and serve him ? Was it only that thou mightest eat, and drink, and sleep, and go up and down, and fill up a room among the living ? Why, beasts, and fools, and madmen do all this, as well as thou. Why hast thou thy reason and understanding, but to know and serve the Lord ? Is it only to know how to shift a little for the commodities of the world ? or is it not to know the way to life eternal ? Look round about thee on all the creatures, and on all the mercies which thou dost possess ; every deliverance, and privilege, and accommodation ; every bit of bread thou eatest, and every hour of thy precious time, are all given thee for this one thing needful. And yet wilt thou say that this one thing is needless, for which thou hast all things ? Thou mayest then say, that God made the world in vain ; and preserveth and governeth it in vain. For all this is but for his service, which thou callest vain.

Quest. 11. ‘ Doth not reason tell thee, that the place in which thou must live for ever, should be more diligently minded and prepared for, than this in which thou must continue but for a while ?’ Alas, it is so short a time that we

must be here, that it makes all the matters of this world (as such) to be inconsiderable things, as dreams and shadows. What great matter is it for so short a time, whether we be rich or poor, well or sick, in credit or in contempt; whether we laugh or weep, when our part will be so quickly acted, and we must go naked out of the world as we came into it! For so short a time, a poor habitation may serve the turn, as well as the most splendid palace. A painful, obscure, afflicted life may do as well as the most plentiful provisions, and the greatest ease and worldly honours. The purple and fine linen, the silks and bravery will be soon forgotten; and the soul in hell will be no more the better for them than the rotten carcase in the grave. The taste of the delicious meats and drinks will quickly be forgotten; and sportful youth will be turned into cold and languid age; and the most confirmed health into dolorous sickness; and mirth and laughter into mournful groans. And is such a transitory life as this more worthy of your care and greatest diligence, than life eternal? O! one would think that the world that you must be ever, ever in, should never, never be forgotten! There is the company that you must live with for ever. There is the state that you shall never change. There is the joy or torment that shall have no end; and while you forget it you are posting to it, and are almost there. And can you be too careful for eternity?

Quest. 12. 'Consider also but the infinite joys of heaven, and tell me, whether thou dost think they are not worthy the greatest cost or pains that thou canst be at to get them? Dost thou think that heaven is not worthy of the labour that is bestowed for it by the most holy saints on earth? Will it not requite them to the full? Will any that come thither repent that they obtained it at so dear a rate? If now thou couldst speak with one of those believers mentioned in Heb. xi. that "lived as strangers and pilgrims on earth," as "seeking a better, even a heavenly country;" that preferred the "reproach of Christ before the treasure of the world," and chose "affliction with the people of God," before the "pleasures of sin for a season; that were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might receive a better resurrection; that had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, and of bonds and imprisonments, and were stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, slain with the sword, wandered

about in sheep-skins, and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, and tormented, though men of whom the world was not worthy :” Would any one of these now tell you, that they did or suffered too much for heaven? or that it was not worth ten thousand times more? If thy tongue dare say that heaven is not worth the cost or trouble of a holy life, (or if thy life say so, though thy tongue dare not) thou judgest thyself unworthy of it, and sentencest thyself unto damnation.

Quest. 13. ‘And are the torments of hell so small and tolerable, that thou thinkest a holy life too dear a means for to prevent them?’ Dost thou believe the threatenings of the Lord, that he will “come in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;” 2 Thess. xviii. 9. And yet canst thou say, ‘What needs all this ado to escape such endless misery?’ Thou wilt take any medicine to cure but the gout or stone, if once thou have felt them. Thou wilt draw out a tooth to prevent the pain of it. And is holiness so hateful or grievous a thing to thee, that thou will venture on hell itself to avoid it? If so much of hell be in thy heart already, blame none but thyself if thou have thy choice.

Quest. 14. ‘Why wast thou baptized into the covenant of holiness, to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, if thou think it needless to perform thy covenant?’ A holy life is no more than in baptism thou wast solemnly engaged to. There didst thou renounce the flesh, the world, and the devil; and tookest God for thy portion and absolute Lord, and gavest up thyself to be ruled by him, and saved by Christ, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit; and dost thou now say, ‘What needs all this ado?’ Are we all by our baptismal vow engaged to a needless thing? I tell thee, there is not the most holy man on earth, that doth any more than what he is bound to by the covenant relations which he undertook in baptism.

Quest. 15. Moreover, What a hypocrite art thou to profess thyself a member of the holy catholic church, if holiness, which is the life of the church, seem needless to thee! Why dost thou profess to believe and desire the communion of saints, if the life of saints seem needless to thee, and thou

wilt not have communion with them in their sanctity? Dost thou not plainly renounce thy covenant, and faith, and duty, when thou renoucest a holy life as a thing unnecessary?

Quest. 16. ‘Dost thou think, or darest thou say, that the bloody death, and holy life of Jesus Christ were more than needs in order to thy salvation?’ Unless thou be a profess-ed infidel, I know thou darest not say so. And if thy soul were worth the sufferings of the Lord of life, is it not worth all the cost and labour of thy duty? Christ lived a life of perfect holiness; he never sinned; he fulfilled all righteousness; he prayed all night, and with greatest fervency; preaching and doing good was his employment. Though he hated pharisaical superstition, and the teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, and serving God according to men’s traditions, yet was there never so holy, and pure, and precise, and strict, and heavenly a life as Jesus Christ’s. And this was for our redemption, and our example. And darest thou say that this was needless? Should we not endeavour to imitate our pattern? Are they better that are most like Christ, or they that are most unlike him? And which dost thou think is most like Christ, the holy or the unholy? Sure we that fall so short of the example that Christ hath given us, are far from being more diligent than needs, when Christ went not too far, nor was too strict, that went so very far beyond us.

Quest. 17. ‘Look upon all the institutions of the Lord. On magistracy, and ministry, and the great works of their office. On prayer, and preaching, and sacraments, and discipline, and all other ordinances of God; and also on all the frame of the holy Scriptures; and also on all the workings and graces of the Holy Ghost; and tell me whether thou darest say, that all or any of these are in vain? and whether that holiness which all these are appointed for, can be a vain and needless thing?’

Quest. 18. ‘Darest thou say that Christ doth more than needs in his intercession for us with the Father now in heaven?’ It is he that sendeth the Spirit to sanctify us. It is he that prayeth that we may be sanctified by the truth? We have no grace and holiness but what we have from him. And darest thou say he doth too much? It is he that sends his ministers to call men to a holy life. Look into his word and see whether the doctrine which they preach be not there

prescribed to them ; and the duties of holiness there commended. If therefore it were erroneous or excessive, it would be long of Christ, and not of his messengers or disciples, that speak and do no more for holiness than he bids them ; but fall exceeding short.

Quest 19. ‘ Art thou wiser in this, and more to be believed, than all the ancient prophets, and apostles, and servants of God in former ages, and than all that are now alive on earth, that ever tried a holy life ? ’ The Scripture will tell thee that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and all the rest of the saints that were then most dear to God, were so far from thinking that a holy life was more than needs, that they thought they could never be holy enough, and blamed their defects when they excelled such as now thou blamest as too precise. And if thou wilt prefer the words and example of a worldling, or of a sottish ; sensual man, before the judgment and example of these saints, the company that thou choosest, and the deceivers whom thou followest, shall be also thy companions in calamity, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see the saints from east and west, from north and south, sit down with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you, and such as you, thrust out. Even when the last in time (whom you here despised) shall be equal to the first and ancient saints ; Luke xiii. 27—30. Why do you hypocritically honour the names and memorials of the prophets, apostles, and other former saints, and keep holydays for them, and yet reproach their holy course, and prefer the judgment of a drunkard or a malignant enemy of godliness before theirs ? For so you do when you argue against a holy life.

Quest. 20. ‘ Dost thou think that there is now one soul in heaven or hell, that is of thy profane opinion, and would say, that a diligent, holy life is more ado than needs for men’s salvation ? ’ Certainly those in heaven have more knowledge, and experience, and love to God and man, and goodness, than to be of so impious a mind, or once to entertain such beastly thoughts. And those in hell, though still unholy, have learned to their cost to know the great necessity of holiness ; and would tell you, if they could speak with you, that the most strict and heavenly life for millions of ages were not too dear for the escaping of the everlasting misery. Why else do we find one of them in Luke xvi. described

as to be desirous, that one from the dead might be sent to his brethren, to warn them that they come not to that place of torment? And what is it that he would have had them warned of, but that they should live a holy, self-denying life, and with all their diligence lay up a treasure in the life to come instead of living so sensual, and voluptuous, and ungodly a life as he had lived. The scope of the story tells us, that this would have been his message, if he might have sent.

Quest. 21. ‘Dost thou think in thy conscience that at the hour of thy death, or at least at judgment, thou shalt think thyself that holiness was unnecessary?’ Doth not thy heart tell thee that then thou shalt be of another mind? and wish with the deepest desires of thy soul, that thou hadst lived as strictly, and prepared for everlasting life as seriously, and served God as diligently as ever did any saint on earth? But alas, those wishes will be then too late. Now is thy day; and now thou takest thy work to be needless: and to see the necessity when time is gone, will be thy torment, but not thy remedy. Not one in this congregation, or town or country, not one in England, or in all the world, but shall be forced at last, whether he will or no, to justify the wisdom of the godly, and the worst of you shall then, with ten thousand fruitless groans, desire that you had imitated the most holy persons that you knew. Not a tongue then shall say, ‘What needs all this ado for heaven?’ Not a man there dare call his neighbour Puritan, nor take up a contemptuous jeer against the diligent servants of the Lord.

Quest. 22. ‘Is not that man at the heart against the Lord, that reproacheth his serious, diligent servants, and counts his work a needless thing?’ Men are more willing to please those that they love, and more ready to do the works they love. If your son or servant speak against your service, but as you do against God’s, what would you think of their affections? Doubtless it is no better than a secret hatred to the holiness of God, and a serpentine enmity to his holy ways, that causeth all these senseless cavils, and impious speeches, against the life that he hath commanded us to live.

Quest. 23. ‘Is it not most unreasonable impiety, for that man to speak against too strict, exact obedience, and against serving God too much, that hath served the world, the flesh and the devil in the vigour and flower of his days, and this with pleasure, and never said, It is too much?’ When thou

wast drinking and sporting thou wast not weary. When it comes to a matter of riches, or honour, or ease, or pleasure, to gratify thy worldliness, pride, laziness, and voluptuousness, then thou never sayest, It is too much ! And is all too little for sin and the devil, and all too much for thy soul and God ? Let conscience tell thee whether this be just.

Quest. 24. ‘ Is it not a foolish wickedness for that man to cry out against making haste to heaven, and going so fast in the ways of God, that hath loitered already till the evening of his days, and lost so much time as thou hast done ?’ If thou hadst begun as soon as thou hadst the use of reason, and remembered thy Creator in the days of thy youth, and never lost an hour of thy time since then till now, thou hadst done no more than what thy God, thy soul, and all right reason required of thee ! For surely he that made thee, hath in wisdom proportioned thy time to thy work, and hath not given thee an hour too much. A long life is short enough to prepare for everlasting. And shall a loitering rebel that hath wasted so much of his little time, cry out, What needs so much ado ?

Quest. 25. ‘ Is it not the graceless, miserable sort of men that cry out, What needs all this ado ?’ Certainly it is. For Scripture and reason, and experience tell us, that all that are godly, are of another mind. The more grace they have, the more they would have. The more they love God, the more they would love him. The more good they do, the more they would do. Do you not see how they labour after more grace ? and hear how they complain that they are no better ? O how it would glad them to be more holy and more heavenly ! It is therefore the strangers and despisers of grace, that never knew by experience, the nature, and power, and sweetness of it, that say, ‘ It is more ado than needs.’ And is it not a most unreasonable thing for a man that hath no saving grace and holiness at all, to cry out against excess of holiness ? And for a man that is in the captivity of the devil, and ready suddenly to drop into hell if death do but strike the fatal blow before he be regenerate, to talk against doing too much for heaven ? And for a man that never did God one hour’s pleasing service (Heb. xi. 6.) to prate against serving God too much ? O poor wretch ! were thine eyes but opened, thou wouldst see that of any man in the town or country, this language ill beseemeth.

thee. When God hath been so long offended, and thy soul is almost lost already, and death and hell is hard at hand, and may swallow thee up in endless desperation for aught thou knowest, before thou hast read this book to the end, or before thou see another year, or month, or day, is it time for such a one as thee to say, ‘What needs so much ado?’ One would think if there be any life in thee thou shouldst stir as for thy life; and if thou have a voice to cry, thou shouldst cry out to God both day and night in fervour of thy soul, even now while mercy may be had, lest time should overslip thee, and thou be shut up in the place of torment. If hell-fire will not make thee stir, what will? Should a weak Christian that is cast behindhand by his negligence but once speak against a diligent life, he were exceedingly to blame. But for thee that art yet in the gall of bitterness, and the misery of an unregenerate state, to speak against holy diligence for salvation, when thou art in such great and deep distress, and like a man that is drowning, or a house on fire, that must presently have help or perish; this is a madness that hath no name sufficient to express it by; which it is a wonder that a rational soul should be guilty of.

Quest. 26. ‘Art thou not afraid of some sudden vengeance from the Lord, for thus making thyself his open enemy, and contradicting him to his face? Mark his language, and then mark thine. Christ saith, “Enter in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it;” Matt. vii. 13, 14. “Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you will seek to enter in, and shall not be able;” Luke xiii. 24. “See then that ye walk circumspectly (or exactly), not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time;” Ephes. v. 15, 16. “For I say unto you, that except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven;” Matt. v. 20. “Wherefore brethren, give all diligence to make your calling and election sure;” 2 Pet. i. 10. “Work out your salvation with fear and trembling;” Phil. ii. 12. “Seeing then all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting to the coming of the day of God;”

2 Pet. iii. 11, 12. "And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear;" 1 Pet. iv. 18. "Lay not up for yourselves a treasure on earth, &c. but lay up for yourselves a treasure in heaven, &c. For where your treasure is there will your hearts be also;" Matt. vi. 19—21. "Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;" Matt. vi. 33. "Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life;" John vi. 27. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force;" Matt. xi. 12. "Know ye not that they which run in a race, run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery, is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly: so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be castaway;" 1 Cor. ix. 24—27. "Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness; incline your ear, and come unto me; hear and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you," Isa. lv. 1—3. "Be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;" Rom. xii. 11. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men; teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and sanctify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works;" Tit. ii. 11—14. "Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully;" Jer. xlviii. 10. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might. For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest;" Eccles. ix. 10.

These and such like are the sayings of God, by which thou mayest easily understand his mind concerning the necessity of a serious, diligent, holy life. And shall a blind and wretched worm come after, and dare to contradict him, and unsay all this, and say, 'What needs so much ado?'

What! darest thou thus openly resist God to his face? What art thou? and what is thy word, that we should regard it before the word of God?

Quest. 27. 'Dost thou not know that by thy speaking against a diligent, holy life, thou gratifiest the devil, and openly servest him, and sayest the very things that he would have thee say?' What can more please him, and advance his kingdom, and suit his malicious ends, than to stop and cool men in the service of the Lord, and make them believe that holiness is but a needless thing? If the devil might have leave to walk visibly among men, and speak to them in their language, he would speak to them as thou dost, and say the same things, which he puts into thy mouth; and would do all that he could to keep men from a holy life. And darest thou thus openly play his part?

Quest. 28. 'Canst thou think (when eternal life is at the stake) that a man so weak in the midst of so many hindrances and enemies, hath cause to count his diligence unnecessary?' When satan, like a roaring lion, is seeking day and night to devour thee (1 Pet. v. 8.), when his malice, subtlety and diligence is so great, and so unwearied; when his instruments are so many, so subtle, and so powerful; when the world aboundeth round about thee with such dangerous enticing snares and baits; when thy traiterous flesh so near thee is thy most perilous enemy, incessantly drawing thee from God unto the creature; and when thou art so impotent to resist all these assaults; art thou then in a condition fit to cry out against the greatest diligence for thy soul? Should a man going up the steepest hill, when it is for his life, be afraid of going too fast? When thou hast done all thou canst, it is well for thee that ever thou wast born, if it suffice. If weaknesses and enemies cause such a difficulty that the righteous themselves are scarcely saved (that is, with much ado), is it then time for thee to ask, What needs so much ado.

Quest. 29. 'Dost thou not deal exceeding unthankfully and unequally with God? When he thinks not the sun and moon, and all the creatures too good to serve thee, nor all his mercies too great for thee; no, not the blood of his beloved Son, nor his Spirit, nor heaven itself if thou wilt accept them in his way; wilt thou think thy best too good for him? and thy most diligent service to be too much? When

thy all is next to nothing ; and thy best doth not profit the Almighty, but thyself, and the gain will be thy own. If a man should think it too much to put off his hat and thank thee, when thou hast given him a thousand pounds ; or to go a mile for thee, when thou hast saved his life ; thou wouldst say he were not a man, but a monster of ingratitude. But thy unthankfulness is ten thousandfold worse to God, who would deliver thee from everlasting torments, and give thee everlasting glory, and save thee from satan and all thy sins, if thou wilt but take his safe remedies ; and thou churlishly refusest, as if all were not worth so much ado.

Quest. 30. ‘Dost thou know what a life it is that thou accountest an unnecessary toil?’ It is a life of the greatest safety, commodity, honour, and delight, (besides the justice and honesty of it) of any in the world ; and indeed thou canst not choose any other but at thy peril, and to thy greatest loss and ruin, and to thy present and everlasting shame and sorrow. It is the sweetest and most pleasant life on earth, that thou ignorantly accountest such a tedious toil. The manifestation of this shall be my work in the second part of this discourse.

And now I dare affirm, that when the dreadful God shall shortly judge thee who hast read or heard these words, it will be found indelibly written upon thy conscience, that thou hadst here such reasons laid before thee, to prove the necessity of a serious, diligent, holy life, as all the wit in earth or hell is not able solidly to confute ; and that an ungodly, sensual life is most unreasonable ; and that, if after this, thou continue in an unsanctified, fleshly state, thou shalt justly perish as one that wilfully refused salvation, as in dispute of God, his mercies, and his messengers, and of the plainest, undeniable truth and reason : and that in refusing to be a SAINT, thou madest thyself in the greatest matters no better than a BRUTE, wilfully subjecting thy reason to thy sensuality, and judging thyself unmeet for everlasting happiness.

But here I know the self-deceiving hypocrite will object, ‘That all this that I am proving so diligently is confest, and nothing to the point in question : which is not, Whether one thing be needful, and holiness be of necessity to salvation ? For who denieth this ? But the question is, Whe-

ther it be this puritanical, precise way of serving God which only deserves the name of holiness? and whether they be not as truly godly and sanctified that say their prayers morning and night, and go to church on Sundays, and follow their businesses the rest of the week, without any more ado?

Ans. Either it is the substance of holy duties, or but the circumstances, which you quarrel at as puritanical and precise. If it be only the circumstances (as whether we should receive the Lord's supper standing, or kneeling, or sitting? whether we should pray publicly without book, or in the book? and whether a Scripture form or another be better? and whether a continued speech, or versicles, anthems, and oft-repeated words and sentences be better? What form of church government is best? by diocesan bishops, or by all the pastors? and the like), it is not such things as these that I am pleading with thee. Though some of them are matters of considerable moment for the helping or hindering men in godliness; yet it is greater matters than these that I am now contending for. Agree with us practically in the substance; in faith, repentance, love, obedience, mortification, heavenliness, humility, patience, and serious diligence and zeal in all, and then I am none of those that will condemn or censure you; but one that will rejoice in you, as those that I hope to rejoice with for ever.

But if it be the substantial duties of godliness that you resist, while you own but the name of godliness in the general, I must tell you that it is not names and generals that will save you; nor prove that you have yourselves one spark of grace. Nothing more easy and common than for the most ungodly to say, they are all for a godly life; and God forbid that any should be against it; when yet they hate and reject it indeed, when it comes to the practice of those particular duties in which it doth consist. It is not godliness that they hate and reproach, but it is fervent prayer, holy conference, meditation, self-denial, mortification of the desires of the flesh, heavenly-mindedness, &c. In general, they will say that God's law must be obeyed, and his will preferred before their own. But when it comes to the particulars, they love him not above all, they take his name in vain, they keep not holy his day, they disobey superiors that would reform them, they are envious, malicious, covetous, lustful, and break all the commandments in particular, which

in general they profess to keep. As if your servant should promise to do your work ; and when you set him to it, one thing is too hard, and another he is not used to, and so he hath his exceptions against the greatest part which he undertook. As if one should wound one of you in the head, and stab you to the heart, and cut off an arm or a leg, and say, ‘ I wish the man no harm. It is not the man that I hate or hurt, but only the head, the heart, the arm, &c.’ Even so it is not holiness that these men hate, and speak against ; but it is so much praying, and meditating, and reading the Scriptures, and making such a stir about religion when less ado may serve the turn.

But, wretched soul, if thou have not the wit to see the contradictions of thy deceitful tongue, and the venom of thy malignant heart, dost thou think that such sottish shifts as these will blind the eyes of heavenly justice, and save thee from the vengeance of a holy God, which he hath denounced against rebellious hypocrites ? But come on ; let us try whether the several parts of godliness which thou questionest, or callest Puritanism or preciseness, are not most expressly and peremptorily commanded in the word of God.

1. Is it so much preaching and hearing sermons that thou quarrellest with ? Hear then how Christ and his apostles preached, and how they required men to hear : “ And in the morning rising up a great while before day, he went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed. And Simon, and they that were with him followed after him ; and when they had found him, they said unto him, All men seek for thee. And he said, Let us go unto the next towns, that I may preach there also ; for therefore came I forth : and he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee ;” Mark i. 35. 37—39. “ And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them ; no, not so much as about the door, and he preached the word unto them ;” chap. ii. 2. “ And they went into a house, and the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread : and when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him ; for they said, He is beside himself ;” chap. iii. 19—21. “ And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ ;” Acts v. 42. “ They that were scattered went every where preaching the word ;” chap. iv. 4. “ I kept

back nothing that was profitable to you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house. — Take heed therefore to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood — Therefore watch, and remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears ;” chap. xx. 20. 28. 31. “ How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard ? and how shall they hear without a preacher ?” Rom. x. 14, 15. “ Every way whether in pretence or in truth Christ is preached, and I do therein rejoice, yea and will rejoice ;” Phil. i. 18. “ It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe ;” 1 Cor. i. 21. “ Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man, in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus,” &c. Col. i. 28, 29. “ I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom, preach the word ; be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and doctrine ;” 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2. “ Necessity is laid upon me ; yea, woe unto me if I preach not the Gospel ;” 1 Cor. ix. 16.

What say you now ? do we not fall much short of those that we should imitate, rather than do too much in preaching ? But what need we more than the text itself, where for hearing, Mary is so commended, and her sister blamed for neglecting it, though it was to make provision for Christ himself and those that were with him ? “ And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached to them, being to depart on the morrow, and continued his speech until midnight ;” Acts xx. 7. “ Let every one be swift to hear ;” James i. 19. “ He that hath an ear, let him hear ;” Rev. ii. 7, &c. “ Jesus said, My mother and my brethren are those which hear the word of God and do it ;” Luke viii. 21. I hope you see this duty is past question.

2. Is it the reading of the Scripture that is the Puritanism, or too much ado that you blame ? Or is it the frequent meditating on such high and holy things ? Hear what the Spirit saith of this. “ Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of

sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night.—The ungodly are not so—;” Psal. i. 1, 2. “O how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day. Thy testimonies are my meditation. Mine eyes prevent the night-watches, that I might meditate in thy word;” Psal. cxix. 97. 99. 148. “I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food;” Job xxiii. 12. “The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver;” Psal. cxix. 72. “Have ye not read the Scriptures?” Mark xii. 10. The eunuch “sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet;” Acts viii. 28. “Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine;” 1 Tim. iv. 13. I hope you see also that this part of godliness is past question.

3. Is it much and fervent prayer that is the preciseness or too much ado that you make question of? Hear then what the Holy Ghost doth say of that. “In every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;” Phil. iv. 6. “Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God concerning you;” 1 Thess. v. 17, 18. “And he spake a parable to them to this end, that men ought always to pray and not to faint;” Luke xviii. 1. “I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you;” Luke xi. 8, 9. “He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God;” Luke vi. 12. Daniel would not give over praying three times a day in his house, for thirty days’ space at the king’s command, no, not to save his life from devouring lions. David saith, “Seven times a day do I praise thee;” Psal. cxix. 164. “Arise, cry out in the night; in the beginning of the watches pour out thy heart like water before the face of the Lord;” Lam. ii. 19. It is part of the wicked atheists’ description that “they call not upon the Lord;” Psal. xiv. 4. “Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and the families that call not on thy name;” Jer. x. 25. “The Lord is nigh to all that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth;” Psal. cxlv. 18. When Paul was converted, the

Lord lets Ananias know it by this token, "for behold he prayeth;" Acts ix. 11. "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication;" Acts i. 14. The three thousand converts "continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and breaking of bread, and in prayers;" Acts ii. 42. "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same, with thanksgiving; withal praying also for us, that God would open to us a door of utterance, to speak the mysteries of Christ;" Col. iv. 2. "Continuing instant in prayer;" Rom. xii. 12. "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much;" James v. 16. "For every creature is sanctified by the word of God and prayer;" 1 Tim. iv. 5. "She that is a widow indeed and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day;" 1 Tim. v. 5. "Praying in the Holy Ghost;" Jude 20. "Night and day praying exceedingly;" 1 Thess. iii. 10. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; and for me, &c." Ephes. vi. 18. "What prayer or what supplication soever shall be made of any man, or of all thy people Israel, when every one shall know his own sore, and his own grief, and shall spread forth his hands in his house, then hear thou from heaven, &c." 2 Chron. vi. 29.

I hope by this time, if you have eyes, you see that more frequent and fervent prayers than any of us use (and that without book), were used by the ancient servants of the Lord, and were not thought too much ado, nor more ado than God requireth of us.

4. Is it constant, diligent teaching, instructing and catechising your families, and labouring that yourselves and they may understand and practise the law of God? Hear also what the Spirit saith of this; and then judge, whether it be too much preciseness.

"My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee, so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thy heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hidden treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God;" Prov. ii. 1—5. "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy

heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes; and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates;" Deut. vi. 5—7. 11. 18—20. "For I know Abraham that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord;" Gen. xviii. 19. "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord;" Josh. xxiv. 15. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it;" Prov. xxii. 6. "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;" Eph. vi. 4. These and many such passages shew you that the most diligent instructing of your families is not more ado than God requireth, but a most weighty, needful part of godliness.

5. Is it the meeting of divers neighbours together (distinct from church meetings) that you question? Why, if it be schismatical in opposition to the public meetings, or to do any unlawful work, we are against it as well as you. But if it be but for the redeeming of their time, for their spiritual advantage, and orderly, peaceably, and soberly observed, by some that have more time, or care of their souls, than the rest of their neighbours; sure you will not for shame imagine, that neighbours may lawfully meet to make merry, and feast, and sport, and confer about their worldly business, and yet may not meet to pray, and praise God, and repeat what instructions they have received of their teachers, and prepare for and improve the public ordinances? Hear what the Spirit saith also to this. In the text here you find just such a meeting, where Christ was teaching, and Mary and his disciples hearing, and Martha cumbered with providing for the company, and blamed for neglecting the advantage for her soul. Peter came out of prison to the house of Mary, where many were gathered together praying; Acts xii. 12. Cornelius "called together his kinsmen and near friends" to hear Peter, who there preached to them, converted and baptized them; Acts x. 24. I need to instance in no more, because this was the

ordinary practice of Christ and the apostles. If you say, Those were times of persecution ; I answer, True ; but, 1. Yet such times in which public assemblies were ordinarily held, and public preaching used. 2. And as the good of men's souls required it in times of persecution, so when the good of souls requires it, in times of liberty, it is from the same general reason a duty ; but never forbidden by Christ in any times of greatest prosperity and peace.

6. Is it the holy observation of the Lord's day that is the preciseness that you cannot away with ? Of all men, it seems not them to quarrel at this, that own our homilies, and with the Common Prayer, use after the fourth commandment to say, ' Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law ;' when they have heard, ' Remember that thou keep holy the sabbath-day, thou, thy son, thy daughter, thy man-servant, thy maid-servant, thy cattle, and the stranger that is within thy gates.' You see all the aforesaid duties must be performed, and public assemblies for God's worship and our instruction continued : and therefore there must be some known appointed time for these. And do you know any other day that is fitter ? I think you will not pretend to that. You would not have another day instead of this ; but you would have no day at all for such holy works, but a day for ease, and idleness, and sports, and vain discourse, and pleasures, with some little formal public worship intermixed to cheat your souls. It is not then the day, but the serious, diligent, holy employment and duty that you are against ; and that I have proved to be God's will before. Doubtless, if you leave all men to serve God when they will, without any stated time, his worship will soon be brought to nothing, and they that pretend to keep every day holy, will keep none. Look upon the places where the Lord's day is kept holy, and see whether godliness flourish not there incomparably above all other places. And I think none can doubt but that more souls have been converted and brought home to God on that day than on any day of the week, if not than all the rest beside. And there is not the most peevish, malignant soul of you, that can with any show of reason prove that the holy observation of the Lord's day is unlawful, if it were not necessary ; so that we are at least on the safest side of the hedge. For we can say that we can take a most happy opportunity for the

good of our own souls, and the worshipping of God ; and that we are sure to do that which is no sin. Our adversaries themselves do not charge us with doing that which is forbidden, but that which they conceit unnecessary. But if we should do as they, and neglect this day, we are not sure but it may be a great sin ; (nay, indeed, we are sure it would be so.)

But what saith the Holy Ghost now to this question ? To pass by the fourth commandment at this time, the letter of it, and the equity and reason of a seventh day, the advantage of reason why there should be no less under the Gospel, and such like ; I shall only now say these two things. (1.) It is plain in Scripture that ('de facto') the apostles and churches used to meet for holy communion in God's worship on the Lord's day ; and consequently that this was appointed by the apostles, or immediately by Christ himself, there being then no other who pretended to any such authority ; and that apostolical allowance no man questioneth. The apostles then having the extraordinary gift of the Spirit, by which they were enabled infallibly to make known the will of God, and being commissioned as well as enabled hereunto ; as their writing of the Holy Scriptures, so their constitutions for the ordering of the church, being the effects of that authority received from Christ, and that ability given them by the Spirit, are divine, and principally the acts of Christ and the Holy Ghost, whose agents the apostles were. Now that the first churches did by their appointment observe the Lord's day for holy actions, is apparent. As Christ first laid the groundwork by rising on that day, so he began that very day to preach unto Mary the comfortable doctrine of his ascension in words that deserve to be written in gold, or rather in the deepest room of every true believer's heart ; " Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God ;" John xx. 17. The first sermon that ever was preached on a Lord's day, even on the first Lord's day by Christ himself, even to a beloved penitent woman, whom he chose to be as it were his apostle to his apostles, to deliver them this message as from him.

On the same day the disciples being assembled, he owned and blessed their assembly, and gave them the Holy Ghost and apostolical power.

When Thomas being absent from the assembly the first

Lord's day, did miss the sight of Christ and was unbelieving, Christ left him a whole week in his unbelief, and would not heal him till the next Lord's day, which he honoured with that cure. Then the disciples being met again, Christ came among them, and convinced Thomas.

On another Lord's day they were all with one accord in one place, and the Holy Ghost was in the extraordinary measure given them. And Acts xx. 7. it is mentioned as the custom of the disciples, to come together on the first day of the week to break bread; and Paul then preached to them even till midnight. And 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. the collections for the saints were made every first day of the week in all the churches of Galatia, and at Corinth, because they had then their holy assemblies. And therefore Rev. i. 10. it is called peculiarly The Lord's day.

(2.) But to clear this past all rational doubting, we find in all the writings of the ancients, and histories of the church, that all the churches through the world unanimously observed the Lord's day as instituted by Christ, or the Holy Ghost in the apostles; none ever questioning or contradicting it, that I ever read of. He that hath read the writings of the ancients, and denieth this, is unworthy to be disputed with. The practice of the universal church is a full exposition of the forecited Scriptures; and though it be no law to us itself, yet is it a full discovery of the fact, (telling us what was the primitive practice,) and so a discovery of the law. And shall any private ignorant man come in after one thousand, six hundred and twenty-six years, and say the apostles and all the churches in the world have been deceived till this day, and we must rectify the mistake? Shall these fellows come in at the end of the world, and call the apostles and all the churches of all ages Puritans, for keeping holy the Lord's day? Or will any but a brain-sick person hearken to such shameless men as these?

Object. 'But the ancient churches did not keep that day as a sabbath, but only as a day for public worship.'

Answer. We will not stick with you for the name. We urge you not to call it the sabbath, (though the ancients sometimes did so: see our Homilies "Of the Place and Time of Prayer,") if you will call it as Scripture and the churches did, by the name of the Lord's day. And it was then the custom of the churches to spend almost all the day

in public worship and holy communion, and therefore they had but little time for any private duties that day. And yet (though the private practices of particular persons on that day be little mentioned in church-history,) no man can prove that they used to spend any remaining hours of that day as common time in common business. So that to quarrel against the holy observation of the Lord's day, is but to quarrel with the Holy Ghost and the apostles, and all the churches of all ages since, and with the happiest season for the worshipping of God, and seeking our own and other men's edification.

7. What is there yet remaining then that you quarrel with as too much preciseness? Is it the strictness of men's lives in forbearing sin, and not doing as their neighbours do, in rioting, and vain recreations, and delights? For this I need not stand to justify them, with any impartial, sober man. If sin be evil, and displease God, and deserve damnation, he that most fully and carefully avoideth it, is the honestest and the wisest man. You will not blame your child or servant for being loath to offend and disobey you, even in the smallest matter. You like not him that offereth you the least abuse, so well as him that offereth you none. You had rather be well than have the least disease. You will not take a little poison; nor would you feel a little of hell. Why then should we not avoid the least sin so far as we are able? If sinning be good, then devils are the best creatures, and angels and Christ (in his manhood) the worst. But if sin be the greatest evil, what will you call those men that do not only wilfully commit it, but plead for it, and reproach those that would fain avoid it? Or what if some of those that you reproach, are mistaken in some point, and take that to be a sin that is none? Or what if you think it to be no sin which they scruple? Will you blame a man that loves God, to be afraid of that which he suspecteth may offend him? Or will you blame him that cares for his salvation, to make as sure of it as he can, and to keep as far from the brink of hell as he is able? How is it that you observe not that your very reproaches do confute themselves? What is it that you are offended at in the servants of the Lord? Is it good or evil? Surely it is some fault or other of theirs, that you will pretend to be the cause. For scarce any but the devil himself will openly and professedly oppose goodness under the name of goodness.

And if it be a (real or supposed fault that you speak against them for, doth it not intimate that they should avoid all faults, as far as they are able ? And yet will you at the same time reproach them for being too strict, and fearful to offend as if it were their fault that they are unwilling to be faulty ?

But let us hear what God saith of this. "Fools make a mock at sin;" Prov. xiv. 9. "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people;" ver. 34. And yet you make the avoiding it a reproach. "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door;" Gen. iv. 7. "Be sure your sin will find you out;" Numb. xxxii. 23. "Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death;" James i. 15. "Abstain from all appearance of evil;" 1 Thess. v. 22. "But I say unto you, that for every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified; and by thy words thou shalt be condemned;" Matt. xii. 36. 37. "Whosoever shall break one of the least of these commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven;" Matt. v. 19. "But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment—— but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire;" ver. 22. "I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery already with her in his heart;" ver. 28. "I say unto you, swear not at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool:—— but let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil;" ver. 34—37. "But above all things, my brethren, swear not; neither by heaven, neither by the earth, nor by any other oath; but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay, lest you fall into condemnation;" "But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not be once named amongst you as becometh saints: neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient; but rather giving of thanks;" Ephes. v. 3, 4. An hundred such passages of Scripture I might recite, that might quickly satisfy you what God expecteth, and whether it be too much preciseness to fear the smallest sin.

8. But perhaps it is the rigor of their church discipline that maketh you offended with those that you count too pure and precise; because they will not let other men alone, but are reproving them, and bringing them to open penitence and confession of their open sins, and casting those out of the communion of the church, which do refuse it.

Answ. But do they do this of themselves, or doth God command it them? Do you think that the communion of saints is to be turned into a rabble of impiety; and the church into a swine-sty? Do you not know that the canons of the ancient churches for many hundred years after Christ, are stricter in this discipline by far, than those that now offend you by their strictness? And hear what the Holy Ghost saith, "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him;" Lev. xix. 17. "If thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man or a publican;" Matt. xviii. 15—17. "For I verily as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already as though I were present concerning him that hath done this deed, that in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one to satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus—Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven—— Now I have written to you not to keep company; if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one no not to eat—— therefore put away from among yourselves the wicked person;" 1 Cor. v. "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us——And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be

ashamed ;" 2 Thess. iii. 6. 14. " If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed ; for he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds ;" 2 John 10, 11. " Confess your faults one to another ;" James v. 16. " Give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him, and tell me now what thou hast done ; hide it not from me ;" Josh. vii. 19. " He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy ;" Prov. xxviii. 13. Doth not all this justify the exercise of discipline, and condemn the neglect of it ?

9. But, (saith the impious person,) why make they such a difference between themselves and other men ; extolling themselves as the only servants of the Lord, and condemning others as ungodly and children of the devil, and terrifying men's consciences with the fears of hell ?

Ans. If any do so against such as are sanctified and renewed, and have the Spirit of Christ, and live to God, they deal uncharitably : and if you dislike their censoriousness, so do I, and so do all the sober, considerate servants of the Lord. But if it be only against the carnal, unsanctified world that they do thus, it is God that maketh the difference, and not they. Do you not find the whole Scripture dividing all the world into two ranks, the godly and the ungodly ? the regenerate and the unregenerate ? the converted and unconverted ? the sanctified and unsanctified ? the carnal and the spiritual ? the earthlyminded and the heavenly-minded ? the pardoned and unpardoned ? the justified and unjustified ? the children of God and the enemies of God ? the servants of God and of the devil ? the heirs of heaven and the heirs of hell ? To prove this would be to repeat the Bible. Read Psalm i. x. xv. xxvii. Matt. v. Rom. viii. John iii. Matt. xiii. 1 John iii. &c. Do you not find Christ himself acquainting you beforehand that one sort shall be set at his right hand in judgment, and the other at his left ? and one part sent to life everlasting, and the other to everlasting punishment ? Matt. xxv. Do they speak any more of the everlasting torments, the worm that dieth not, the fire that is unquenchable, than Christ himself hath done ? Matt. xiii. 2. 2 Thess. i. &c. Do you love to be flattered into hell, and deceived in a matter of everlasting consequence ? Is it not better for you to search your hearts,

and try whether you have the Spirit of Christ or not ; and then search the Scripture, and try whether any man be his that hath not his Spirit (Rom. viii. 9.), or can be saved that is not converted and born again of the Spirit ? Matt. xviii. 3. John iii. 3. 6. “ Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith. Prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobrates ? ” 2 Cor. xii. 5.

10. But you will say that the reason of your distaste against these that are so forward in religion is, that they are inwardly as bad as others, and as proud and worldly ; and why do they not excel others in good works, as much as they do in their devotions ?

Ans. 1. So they do, according to their ability. Twenty years’ trial and more I have had of them since I was a minister of Christ, and I can truly say that, ordinarily, I have known of many a shilling, if not pounds, that have come from the purses of these that you call Puritans and precise, for one groat or penny that I have known come from most others about me of their rank, to any pious and charitable use. But all that are godly, are not rich ; and though Christ extolleth the widow’s two mites, the standers-by regarded them not ; Matt. xii. 42, 43. “ If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not ; ” 2 Cor. viii. 12. And he that hath said, “ Take heed that you do not your alms before men to be seen of them ; otherwise you have no reward of your Father which is in heaven ” (Matt. vi. 1.) ; hath hereby kept his servants from making the world acquainted with much of their deeds of charity. And for the sins of the heart that you charge them with, they are known to none but God, unless they be discovered in their lives. But malice in all ages hath been used to such unproved slanders of the servants of the Lord.

2. But suppose them as bad as malice doth imagine : is that any reason why both they and you should not be better ? It is holiness and not sin that I am pleading for. Is their godliness and care of salvation necessary, or not ? If it be, why do you not imitate them in that ? And if you know any fault in them, take warning and avoid it. But be not so mad as to run into hell, because some fall in the way to heaven, or some miss the way that seemed to go thither.

Imitate not the Judas in Christ's family, but the rest of his disciples, and that not in their falls, but in their faith and piety. All that shall be saved, have both holiness towards God, and justice and charity to men. "The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits;" James iii. 17. If you want the first, you are ungodly; if the latter, are hypocrites. And if the hypocrite and the ungodly will stand snarling here at one another, they shall perish together, in that misery that will convince them that neither of them were the heirs of life; when saints, and none but they, shall live with Christ.

Object. ' But it is but a few that are of so strict a mind and life; and shall none be saved but these few?'

Ans. Christ hath told you whom he will save. He will not falsify his word, nor take the unsanctified into heaven for want of company. He hath told you that the gate is strait, and the way narrow that leads to life, and few there be that find it; Matt. vii. 14. and that it is a little flock to whom the Father will give the kingdom; Luke xii. 32. You shall not want company in heaven, nor find comfort in your company in hell.

But if you would have the number of the godly to be greater, why do you not increase it by your joining with them? Why do not all the town and parish agree together, and bind themselves in a covenant to serve and seek the Lord, as the Israelites; Josh. xxiv. 2 Chron. xv. 12, 13. O happy people that will thus accord, and heartily perform it!

And now, beloved hearers, I have finished this first part of my task, and proved to you the necessity of a holy life. That "one thing is needful," while you pitifully cumber yourselves about "many things," is the message that from Christ I have been hitherto delivering to you. What say you? Are you yet resolved to seek this one thing with the chiefest of your desires, and care, and labour, or are you not? Dare any one of you say that you have not heard that which should resolve a sober, considerate man? I think you dare not. But if you dare, I am sure you shall never be able to make it good, and justify your words to God, or to your consciences at last, or to any wise, impartial person. Now take your choice, whether you will now be SAINTS, and for ever like ANGELS; or now be like BRUTES, and for ever like DEVILS. For one of these must be your case, as sure as you have heard these words.

A SAINT OR A BRUTE.

THE SECOND PART.

Clearly proving by Reason as well as Scripture: I. In general, that Holiness is best, and necessary to our felicity. II. Particularly, that it is best, 1. For Societies. 2. For Individual Persons. And more distinctly, (1.) That it is the only way to Safety. (2.) Of Honesty. (3.) The most Gainful way. (4.) The most Honourable. (5.) The most Pleasant, and therefore to be chosen by all that will obey true Reason and be happy.

CHAP. I.

Holiness and its fruits are the best part. Wherein the Happiness of Saints consisteth.

LUKE x. 4

But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken from her.

THOUGH I have before taken up this latter part of the text by way of motive, in the conclusion of the former part of this Treatise, I am very loath that a subject of so great importance should be so lightly passed over. And therefore, by God's assistance, I shall attempt a fuller handling of it. The Necessity of Holiness I have spoken of already. It is the Goodness of it that I am next to speak of.

And before I enter upon it, let me entreat thee reader, whoever thou art that openest this book, to remember that I am writing, and thou art reading of the greatest and highest matters in the world ; and therefore come not to it with common affections, and read not this as thou wouldst do a history, or a rhetorical oration, to find delight for a curious mind ; but confessing thyself a scholar to Christ, with reverence take thy lesson from him, as that which thou camest into the world to learn, and which all thy comforts, thy hopes, thy safety, and thy everlasting happiness depend upon.

And here in the entrance, I will freely tell you what moveth me to fall upon this subject, and be so earnest with you in this point. One thing is the observation of the carelessness and wilfulness of the most, that live in the neglect of holiness and everlasting life, for all that can be said to persuade them to a wiser course. While they all profess themselves to be Christians, and to take the Scripture for the word of God, and confess this word in particular to be true, that it is heaven and holiness that are the most necessary, and most to be desired and sought after, yet will they not be moved to live according to this profession, nor to love that most which they confess to be the best, nor to seek that first which they confess to be most needful. They have the case here decided by the mouth of the Lord Jesus Christ himself, and as plainly, and fully, and peremptorily decided as they could wish. If they were infidels, and understood but the law of nature, even reason might tell them that there is no doubt of it, but that eternal life is more to be sought after than transitory things. And yet they live as if the case had never been decided by Christ or by reason ; or as if they had never heard of any life but this. Look into most towns, and see whether there be not more at Martha's work (and worse) than at Mary's. Look into most families, and see whether they be not with Martha, troubling themselves with many things, when the good part is almost cast aside. Even in the families of lords, knights, and gentlemen, that are doubly obliged to God, and pretend to be wiser than the ignorant vulgar, the matters of their salvation are turned out of doors, or thrust into a corner, and the matters of their bodies do take up the day. How many Marthas for one Mary shall we find among both rich and poor !

Yea, that is not the worst, but they that are so blind and wicked as to choose the worse part themselves, would have all about them do so too. And as Martha grudgeth at Mary's practice, and complaineth to Christ against her, so these repine at the choice of the godly, and think them but melancholy, crack-brained people, that make more ado for their salvation than they need. And they are not content to keep such ungodly thoughts in their breasts, to their own damnation, but they must be the devil's mouth to spit reproach in the face of holiness, and consequently in the face of Christ, as if they bid defiance to the Lord, and would make it their employment to jeer and scorn men's souls from heaven. If one in a family do with Mary choose the better part (though without any neglect of their calling in the world), the rest make a wonder of them, and some deride them; and some hate, and vilify, and threaten them, and few will imitate them. And who more forward to distaste and despise them than the masters of the families that are bound to teach and lead them in that way! So that a poor soul (even in a land and age that countenanceth holiness more than almost any other in the world) can scarcely sit at the feet of Christ, and learn his word, and seek his kingdom and righteousness first, but they are gazed at, and censured and derided, as if they did some very foolish, needless, yea, or wicked thing! As if it were the only folly for a man to follow Jesus Christ, and obey his God, and save his soul, and do that work with greatest diligence, for which he is a man, for which he hath his life, and time, and mercies, and which if he neglect, he is lost for ever! The Lord have mercy upon the poor deluded world! Whence comes this general damp and dotage upon the understandings and the hearts of men; of great men, of learned men, of men that are accounted wise in the world!

It is good and evil that constituteth all that wonderful difference that is between the reasonable creatures, both here and hereafter. The good of holiness, and the evil of sin do make the difference between the godly and the wicked. The good of everlasting happiness, and the evil of everlasting misery, doth make the difference between the glorified and the damned. Goodness in general is so naturally the object of man's will, that evil as evil cannot be desired, and good as good cannot be hated. What then is the matter that

few attain the greatest good, and few will escape the greatest misery? It is because they would not choose that good, and refuse the way and cause of misery. But how cometh it to pass that men will make no wiser a choice? Is the case so doubtful that they cannot be resolved in it? Every man would have that which he thinks is best for him. Why do men follow after wealth, or pleasure, or credit in the world, but because they take it to be best for them? Why do they set so light by holiness, and Christ, and heaven, but because they apprehend them not to be best for them? Would men refuse, and obstinately against all persuasions refuse a holy life, if they took it practically to be best for them? What! will they contrive their own destruction? Do they long to do themselves a mischief, and the greatest mischief in the world? No, that is not the case; but the matter is this: Their senses draw them another way; their eye, their ear, their taste, their feeling, every sense hath a pleasure of its own, and this sense or flesh is violent and unreasonable, and would fain be satisfied; and reason that was given us to rule it, is bribed, and blinded, and perverted by it, and so is ready as a servant to obey it, and to take its part; and the fleshly mind discerneth not the things of God, for they are spiritually discerned. The will also, and the affections are, by the bias of a fleshly inclination, corrupted and habitually lean to the fleshly part. And that which men love, they will easily think well of, and are glad of any thing like reason to defend it; and that which is against the inclination of the will, will hardly be thought well of, and any thing like reason will serve against it. This depravation of the mind and will of man, enslaved and ruled by the flesh or sensuality, is the very cause that most men will not choose the better part, and so the cause of their perpetual misery. And till the Holy Ghost send in a heavenly light of wisdom into the mind, to shew them the true difference between the good and the evil; and a new inclination into the will, that shall turn their hearts from the evil to the good, they will still go on, and the matters of God will seem foolishness to them, and they will take those men for the veriest fools that follow the wisdom of the Lord, and provide carefully for eternal life; and they will take those for the wisest men, that are most contrary to the God of wisdom, and that dare leap most fearlessly into hell. Or if this

be not their opinion, but conviction force them to a wiser kind of language, yet will it be their practical estimation, and their hearts, as their choice and lives will easily declare. For “that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit;” John iii. 6. The fleshly man will have a fleshly mind and will, and openly or secretly will live after the flesh, and such are the heirs of death; Rom. viii. 5. 7. 13. Fleshly generation cannot make a spiritual mind or heart in any, but it must be by spiritual regeneration. And therefore “except a man be born again of the Spirit,” as well as of “water, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven;” John iii. 3. 5.

This inward difference of inclination is the true cause of the difference of the judgments, and the courses of men, about the matters of God and their salvation.

This is it that makes so many to think none wise but those that are more dangerously mad than men in Bedlam; and that makes so many others stand in doubt as men unresolved what to choose, and what course to follow. As if it were really a difficult point for a man to be resolved in, whether it be best and wisest to follow the teachings of God or of the flesh; and to seek first the kingdom and righteousness of God or to make a pudder for nothing in the world; and to tickle this itching flesh awhile, though they must smart for it for ever, or to master the flesh and live to God!

In a word, the world are half unresolved, Whether it be better to be holy with God’s promise of eternal glory, or to take the pleasures of sin for a season, and neglect this holiness, though this course be threatened by the living God with everlasting torments? This is the true state of the question, which I say one part of the world doth seem to be unresolved in, and another part are resolved on the worser side, against their souls and a holy life; and only those that the illuminating, sanctifying Spirit hath resolved, do choose the needful, better part.

The reason of this distracted judgment of the most, is within themselves. It is not because that there is any such difficulty in the case, as should put a wise man to a stand; nor is it because they have not sufficient evidence in the word, or that God denied them teachers, books, or any necessary means for their information. The light is among

them, but they love it not because their hearts and deeds are evil, and their darkness doth not comprehend it; and this is their delusion, and their condemnation; John i. 6—8. iii. 19.

When I am preaching to a congregation of many hundred or thousand souls, if the salvation of all that people did lie upon any other question no harder than this that we have in hand, so it were such as fleshly interest, and corrupted minds and wills had no quarrel against, how easily, how surely should I save the souls of all that heard me! Reader, let me have thy judgment. If the question were, Whether light or darkness be the better?—Whether a dead corpse be better than a living man?—Whether a cottage for a day, or a rich habitation for term of life be better—Whether as much drink as will make thee drunk, or a night's lodging with a whore, be better than lands and lordships for thy lifetime, or for a thousand years?—Whether one sweet cup with shame and beggary all thy life after, or one bitter draught with perpetual prosperity, should be rather chosen?—Whether a sick man were better take an unpleasing medicine that would cure him, or a pleasant poison that would kill him?—Whether he were better pay a little to the physician, or die to save his money?—Whether that prince be wise that will sell his kingdom for a cup of wine, or for children's rackets?—Or whether that child be virtuous that cannot abide his father's sight, or house, or commands, but loveth better to do that which he knows displeaseth him, or tumble in the dirt with swine?—I say, if any of these were the question to be resolved, and the salvation of all that heard me lay upon the true resolution, I leave it to your own judgments, whether I were not like to save the souls of all that heard me? And yet in a case as clear in itself, and much more clear, how few do we prevail with! Is not the question, Whether God or the creature, holiness or sin, earth or heaven, short or everlasting pleasures should be preferred? as plain to a wise man as any of those that I mentioned before? Is it not as plain a case to a man of judgment, Whether holiness, with everlasting joys, be better than fleshly pleasures with damnation? as Whether a kingdom be better than a jail, or gold than dirt, or health than sickness? Yet do your salvations lie upon this question, this easy question. I must again repeat it: All your salvations lie upon the practical resolution of this easy question. Be but resolved once that God is best for you,

and heaven is best for you, and accordingly make your resolute choice, and faithfully prosecute it, and God will be yours, heaven will be yours as sure as the promise of God is true. But if you will not choose God and glory as your best, but will choose the world and simple pleasures as better for you, you shall have no better than you choose, and shall suffer a double condemnation for neglecting and refusing so great salvation.

You hear now by men's talk, and you see by their lives that the world is divided upon this question, What it is that is best for a man, and which is his best and wisest course. One part (and the greater) think in their hearts that present prosperity is best, because they think that the promised happiness of the life to come is a thing uncertain; or if there be such a thing, they may have it after the pleasures of sin: These are the infidels.

Another part have a superficial dead opinion, that heaven and holiness are best; but the love of the flesh and the world lieth deeper at their hearts, and beareth the greater sway in their lives; and these are the hypocrites; that is, Christians in opinion and profession, and so much of their practice as will stand with their fleshly interest, but infidels in their practical estimation, and at the heart, and in the reserves and secret bent of their lives.

Another part, being illuminated and sanctified from above, believe the certainty and excellency of glory, and see the vanity and vexation of this life, and taste the sweetness of the love of God, and perceive the necessity and sweetness of that holiness, which others so abhor, and hereupon give up themselves to God, and set themselves to seek for the immortal treasure, and make it the principal care of their hearts and business of their lives to escape damnation, and live with Christ in endless glory.

All the world consisteth of these three sorts of men, infidels, hypocrites, and true believers. Now the question is, Which of these three are in the right? Both the other do condemn the hypocrite that halteth between two opinions; and one thinks that Baal is God, that the world is best, and therefore he gives up himself to it; and the other thinks that the Lord is God, and heaven is best, and therefore he gives up himself to it. And if it would do any thing with those that doubt, towards the turning of the scales, to tell

you which side Christ is on, it is told you here in my text, as plain as the tongue of man can speak, "One thing is needful. Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

The doctrine which I am now to handle to you from the plain words of the text, is this :

Doct. 'That those that prefer the learning of the word of Christ, to guide them by holiness to everlasting happiness, before all the lower matters of this world, are they that choose the better part, even that which shall never be taken from them.'

If now the word of Christ alone would serve your turn, I had done my work, I needed not to go any further. You would be now resolved, that heaven and holiness is best, and would set your hearts and lives to seek it ; and so it would be your own for ever. But this text hath long stood in the Gospel, and men have heard and read it often, and yet the most are not persuaded ; and therefore I must try to open it a little further to you, and plead it with you, and work the reason of it upon your minds.

Reader, our business is but to inquire, What it is that is best for man to set his heart on and seek after in his life, and enjoy for ever ? I say, it is the everlasting enjoyment of God in heaven. For Christ saith so. If thou think otherwise let us debate the case. If thou believe as I do, live as thou professest to believe. If men did but deeply and soundly know what it is that is best for them, it would set right their hearts and lives, and make them happy. But not knowing this, is it that keepeth them from God and holiness, and everlastingly undoes them.

Though I have often opened this heretofore on other occasions, yet my present subject now requireth. I. That I tell you what that is that here is called "The good part." II. What it is that is set against it, and by fleshly minds preferred before it. And having briefly opened these two things, I shall come to the comparison, and shew you which is the better part.

I. That which Christ calls here, that good part, is, 1. Principally the end of man, or our everlasting happiness with God in heaven. 2. Subordinately, the means by which it is attained. 3. That happiness which is the end, compre-

hendeth in it these particulars, which if you distinctly apprehend, you will much the better understand the nature and excellency of it.

1. The true believer hath the small beginnings and earnest, and foretastes of the everlasting blessedness in this life in his approaches to God, and living upon him by faith and love, and in his believing apprehensions of the favour of God, the grace of Christ, and the happiness which in heaven he shall enjoy for ever.

2. At death the souls of true believers do go to Christ, and enter upon a state of happiness.

3. At the last day, the body shall be raised and united to the soul, and the Lord Jesus Christ will come in glory to judge the world, where he will openly absolve and justify the righteous, when he condemneth the ungodly, and will be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that do believe, and the saints shall also judge the world, and be themselves adjudged to everlasting glory.

4. Their everlasting habitation shall be in the heavens, even near unto God, and in the presence of his glory.

5. Their company will be only blessed spirits, even the holy angels and glorified saints, with whom we shall be one body, and constitute the new Jerusalem and be perfectly one in God for ever.

6. Their bodies shall be perfected and made immortal, spiritual, incorruptible, and glorious bodies, shining as the stars in the celestial firmament. No more subject to hunger, and thirst, or cold, or weariness, or shame, or pain, nor any of the frailties that now adhere unto them, but be made like the glorified body of Christ.

7. The souls of the saints united to these bodies shall also be perfected, having far larger capacity to know God, and enjoy him than now we have; being freed from all ignorance, error, unbelief, pride, hardheartedness, and whatsoever sin doth now accompany us; and perfected in every part of the image of God upon us.

8. The eyes of the glorified body shall in heaven have a glory to behold that is suitable to their bodily capacity. Heaven being not a place where the essence of God is confined, but where a prepared glory will be manifested to make happy the angels and saints with Christ. And whatever other senses the glorified bodies shall then have (whether for-

mally or eminently, we cannot now conceive what they will be) they will all be satisfied with suitable delights from God.

9. The blessed person of our Redeemer in our nature glorified, will there be the everlasting object of our delightful intuition and fruition. An object suitable to the eye of the glorified body itself. We shall for ever live in the sight of his face, and in the sense of his unspeakable love.

10. The glorified soul (whether mediately or immediately) shall behold the infinite, most blessed God, and by knowing him, be perfected in knowledge. As we shall see the person of Jesus Christ, and the glory of God with open face, and not as in a glass, as now we do, so we shall know so much of the essence of the Deity as we are capable of, to our felicity.

11. With the knowledge of God, and the beatifical vision will be joined a perfect love unto him, and closure with his blessed will. So that to love him, will be the everlasting employment of the soul.

12. This love will be drawn forth into everlasting praise; and it will be our work before the throne of his glory, to magnify the Lord for ever.

13. In all this love, and praise, and glory, and in the full fruition of the eternal God, we shall rejoice with full and perfect joy, and we shall have full content, delight, and rest.

14. In all this blessedness and glory of the saints, the glory of God himself will shine, and angels shall admire it, and the condemned spirits with anguish shall discern it, that God may be glorified in our glory.

15. In all this happiness of believers, and his own glory, the Lord will be well pleased, and that blessed will which is the beginning and the end of all, will be accomplished, and will have an eternal complacency, as the saints shall have an endless complacency in God.

This is the glory promised to the saints; this is that good part which they choose. I cite not the texts of Scripture that prove all this, because the things are all so plainly and frequently expressed in the premises. And I shall have occasion to do somewhat of this anon. And so (in brief) I have told you what the good part is.

II. We are next to inquire, What it is that is put by worldly, carnal men, into the other end of the scales, and is set up in comparison with all this everlasting glory? Yea, what it is that is preferred by ungodly men before it? What it is

that sin and the world will do for men? What do they find that lose the Lord? What do they get that miss of heaven? What do they choose, that refuse the needful, better part?

And here I am even amazed at that which I must give you an account of. O wonderful, astonishing thing, that ever such base, unworthy trifles should, by reasonable men, be put into any comparison with God! Wonderful, that so much madness and wickedness can enter into the mind and heart of man, as to let go all this glory for a toy! And yet more wonderful, that this should be the case of the greatest part of men on earth! And yet more wonderful, that so many make so mad a choice, even when the case is opened to them, and plainly opened, and frequently opened; and when they are carefully entreated to be wiser, and importuned to make a better choice!

In a word, all that is set against the Lord, and all that is preferred before this everlasting life, and all the portion of ungodly men, is no more than this: The pleasure of sin for a season: the satisfying of the flesh. A little ease, and pelf, and fair words from men as miserable as themselves; and all this but for a little, a very little time, when temperance is as sweet at least; a little that is excessive or forbidden, in wealth, or meat, or drink, or clothes, or lust, or other fleshly pleasures, is the joy, and the heaven, and the god of the ungodly. The fleshly pleasures which are common to the beasts, and a little vainglory among men, and this for a short uncertain time (and then to pass to everlasting punishment), this is the chosen portion of the wicked. This is all for which they refuse the Lord, and for which they refuse a holy life. This is all for which they part with Christ, and part with their everlasting peace! This is all that they have for heaven and their salvation! and all for which they sell their souls! To the everlasting shame of sin and sinners, it shall be known that this was all! To the abasing of our own souls, that sometime were guilty of this madness, I shall tell you again that this is all! To the humbling of the best, to the confounding of the wicked, and the amazement of us all, I must say that this is all! This dirt, this dream, this cheat is all that the wicked have for God and glory! This nothing is all that they obstinately prefer and choose before him that is all in all! O wonderful madness, stupidity, and deceit! so common! so wilful! and so

incurable ! till tender mercy and grace shall cure it, in them that shall be saved.

Well, the balance is now set before you. You see what is in the one end and in the other. You see the part that believers choose, and the part that is chosen by the rest of the world. And are you not yet resolved which is best, and which to choose ?

Two sorts I look to meet with here, to whom I shall apply myself distinctly before I come to the comparative work. First some will tell me, that all these are needless words ; and that there is no man so senseless as to think that temporal things are better than eternal, or the world than God, or sin than holiness.

Answ. O that this were true ! how happy then were all the world ! I grant that many are superficially convinced, that are not converted ; and that many have a slight opinion that heaven and holiness is best, that yet have no love to it, and will not seek it above all. But their practical judgment doth not go along with their opinions. They relish the world as sweetest unto them. In the prevailing, deepest thoughts of their hearts, they set most by the pleasures of this world. Why else is their hearts most towards them ? Why else do they choose them, and refuse to live a holy life ? Why have they no delight in God ? and why have we so much ado with them, to bring them to a heavenly mind and life, and all in vain ? What ! will not men be persuaded to choose that which they know is best for them ?

Object. 'Temptations are strong, and men are weak, and so men go against their knowledge.'

Answ. 1. What do temptations prevail with you to do ? Is it not to think well of sinful pleasures, and to think more hardly of the ways of God ? Is it not to like a worldly, fleshly life better than a holy life ? If not, how can you follow those temptations ? And if it be so, then they draw you for that time to think that fleshly pleasures are the better part.

2. But if indeed it be as you say, you are the most inexcusable miscreants in the world. What ! do you know that God is best for you, and yet will you fly from him ? Do you know that heaven is the only happiness, and yet will you seek this world before it. Do you know what is best for you, and will not have it ? and what is worst, and yet will keep it ? Will

you go to hell, and know whither you are going. And will you run from heaven and damn yourselves, and know that you do so? yea, and that while we day by day entreat you to the contrary? If this be the case of any one of you, the God of justice shall teach you to know what you are doing, by his everlasting vengeance. Heaven and earth shall be witness against you, your own consciences, and such confessions of your own shall bear witness against you; that you justly perish, and are damned, because you would be damned, and are shut out of heaven because you would not be persuaded to come thither.

Object. 'But we hope we may have both pleasure here, and heaven hereafter; and that we may be saved by the mercy of God and the blood of Christ, without the sanctification of the Spirit, and though we do not live a holy life.'

Answ. And who gave you these hopes? Is it God, on whom you pretend to trust? or the devil that doth deceive you? Certainly not God; for he hath told you over and over, that he will save none but the sanctified (Acts xxvi. 18.), and "that except a man be born again, even of the Spirit as well as of water, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John iii. 3. 5.), and that "without holiness none shall see the Lord;" Heb. xii. 14. And is it God that persuadeth you that his word is false? Doubtless it is the devil. When God had told Adam and Eve, "that in the day that they did eat the forbidden fruit, they should die the death," was it not the serpent that gave them hopes of living, and told them that they should not die? If you be at that pass that you will take on you to trust in God, and yet will not believe him, but your trust is but trusting that God is a liar, you are as foolish in your presumption, as heathens are in their infidelity. For who is worse, he that believeth that there is no God (as Atheists do), or he that believeth that God is a liar, which is to be no God, and worse?

If therefore you do believe indeed that heaven is best, you must needs believe that holiness is necessary; yea, and best too, when heaven consisteth so much in perfected holiness. And therefore you must choose and seek with the greatest diligence, that happiness which you confess is best, or never hope that it will be yours. O did you at the heart believe it to be best, and that for you, you would love it, and

seek it, and be a holy people without delay. You cannot so turn away from that which you heartily judge to be best for you indeed.

But the most that I have to deal with, are they that cannot be persuaded at the heart, but that feasting, and drinking, and lust, and wealth, and worldly honour are better for them than a holy life, with such promises of heaven as God hath left us. For all or most ungodly men have this persuasion next their hearts, whether they observe it, and know of it or not.

Now with such deluded, unbelieving souls, I am next to plead this weighty cause. If thou that readest this be one of them, that takest a worldly felicity, with God's threatenings, to be better, and rather to be chosen than holiness, with his promise of future happiness, I will now debate the case with thee, and undertake by the light of Christ, to open the horrible folly of thy mistake. And if I do not give thee such sound and weighty undeniable evidence, that no man of reason should resist, to prove the choice of holy persons to be the wisest, and their part the best, I will give thee leave to call me a liar, and a deceiver for ever.

CHAPTER II.

What in Reason he must do that would be certainly resolved which is the best part and way. And who shall be Judge.

BUT before we come to the debate, I have two questions to put to thee, that in reason must be first resolved.

The first is, Whether thou art willing to know the truth, and resolved to choose the best part when thou knowest it? It is in vain for me or any man to reason with thee, if thou wouldst not know; and to shew thee the truth, if thou hate it, and wilt not acknowledge it when thou seest it; and to bring thee in the clearest light, if thou be beforehand resolved to shut thy eyes. And if thou wilt not choose that which thy conscience shall be convinced thou shouldst choose, as being absolutely best, to what purpose then should it be revealed to thee? Wouldst thou be a happy man or not? Wouldst thou have joy or sorrow? good or evil? Stop here,

and before thou goest any further, make me this promise before the Lord, That thou wilt not wilfully resist the light, and that thou wilt choose, and presently, and resolvedly choose, that part that thy conscience shall tell thee upon certain evidence is the best. Promise but this, which no man of reason should refuse, and then we may make something of our debate.

My second question is, Who it is that shall be judge between us in this debate? or whose witness it is that you will take for current?

I am willing to stand to the judgment of any that understand the case, and are impartial. I hope you will consent, that we shall take the most competent witnesses and judge. And if so, 1. You know that the devil is no competent judge. It is he that persuadeth you that present delights are the better part, and rather to be chosen than a holy life. But he is God's enemy, and therefore no wonder if he speak against him. He is your deadly enemy; and therefore no wonder if he would deceive you. He is cast out of heaven himself, and would not have you possess the room that he hath lost. He is a wicked, lying spirit, and therefore is not to be believed. He is a murderer from the beginning, and therefore will not speak for your salvation; Job viii. 44. If the devil be to be believed, then none are wiser than the ungodly, sensual, worldly men; and none are in a worse condition than those that are despised by the world for holiness, and that suffer all things for a life unseen. But the enmity that is planted in your very natures against the devil, I hope will help you to confess, that he must not be the judge.

2. And truly ignorant, ungodly men are unmeet judges. And it is they that bawl against religion, and speak against they know not what. 1. They are blind by nature, and more blind by customary sin. And must a blind man be your judge or witness in a case of everlasting moment? 2. They are inexperienced in the ways of God. How can they judge of a state that they were never in, and of a way that they never went? They never tried the work of the new birth, nor never tried the holy exercise of faith, or love, or any grace, and therefore you may as well take the judgment of a simple man concerning another country, that was never there, or concerning navigation, that never was at sea, or concerning learning that never read a book, or concerning music that

never touched an instrument, as the judgment of an unsanctified man concerning holiness, and communion with God ; unless it be those that have a common convincing light, that causeth them to approve of that which they neglect themselves.

3. And certainly your own sensuality and fleshly minds are unfit judges of the case, for they also are blind and inexperienced. They are not suited unto spiritual things. To which I may add, 3. That they and ungodly men are partial in the case, and therefore unfit to be witnesses or judges. All the Scripture speaks against the devil, and the wicked, and the lusts of the flesh ; and therefore they are a party, even the party that is to be ejected. 4. Yea, they are enemies, and therefore their testimony or judgment is not to be regarded. And what else will speak a word against a holy life, but the devil, the flesh, and wicked men ? Not any. And therefore let it be concluded that these are incompetent judges in the case.

But who then shall be judge ? Let God be judge, let Christ be judge. Who can, who dare refuse this Judge ? Refuse him not ; for none but he is fit and competent. Refuse him not ; for he will be Judge whether you will or no ; and therefore your refusal will be vain. 1. He is most wise, and knoweth all things ; and therefore cannot be deceived. 2. He is infinitely good, and therefore cannot do any wrong. He is impartial, and respecteth not the persons of the greatest. He is most just, and therefore cannot pass an unjust sentence. 3. He only is the Judge that hath full authority to make a final decision of the case. 4. And in a word, he is so absolutely perfect, that he is liable to no just exceptions, nor can men or devils have any thing to say against his judgment. Are you agreed then that God shall be your Judge ? Will you take that for the better part, which he calls better ? If so the controversy is at an end. The living God hath given us his judgment long ago. If you ask me, Where ; I will tell you anon, when I have examined some of the witnesses of the case.

And though I am resolved to own no proper final judge but God, yet under him there are many witnesses that are worth the hearing. Indeed I am content to refer the cause to any one that doth but know what he saith, and is not unfaithful ; (reserving to God the final judgment.)

And 1. Go to the wisest men on earth, and let them be witnesses. What think you of all the prophets and apostles, and of all the ancient fathers of the church? Were not these men wiser than you, or than the sottish scornors that revile the ways which they never went, and speak evil of that which they understand not? If prophets and apostles were not for holiness against a fleshly, worldly life, then I will be of your mind. But if they all as with one heart and mouth do cry down sin, and cry up holiness, why should you then refuse their testimony? Are you wiser than all these?

2. What think you of all the godly, able ministers of Christ that are now alive, or ever were? Are they not wiser than you, and a few drunkards that have scarce wit enough to do the devil's service, without such sottishness as shames his cause? Have none of Christ's ministers, that spend their days in studying and searching after knowledge, more wit even in the matters of God, than a carnal gentleman, or ignorant, malicious wretch, that never used the means for knowledge as these have done? In any other matter you will allow men that have made it the study of their lives, to know more than you. If you want counsel for your estates, you will go to one that hath studied the law. If you are sick, you will sooner seek advice of one that hath made it the business of his life to understand diseases and remedies, than to one that never studied it. You will sooner take the judgment of every tradesman in his trade, than your own or another's that never learned it. Allow but those men to be competent witnesses that have bent their thoughts and prayers, and cares this way, and the controversy is resolved. For what is it that all our sermons plead for, but holiness in order to everlasting happiness? What is it that so many thousand books are written for, but for holiness? Open the books of the wisest men, and see which side it is that they are on? Go to the wisest, ablest ministers, and ask them which is the better part?

3. If wisdom suffice not, let the best and most honest men be witnesses. Who better than Christ, than his apostles, than all the holy martyrs and confessors of the church, and all the doctors and faithful ministers of Christ? Which side think you were they on that laid down their lives for the cause of Christ? Sure they that would rather burn at a

stake, or suffer all the scorns and torments of the world, than forsake a holy, heavenly life, did take it to be better than all the pleasures or profits of the world. Sure all the holy doctors and pastors of the church that lived such holy lives themselves, and spent their days in praying, and watching, and meditating, and preparing for the life to come, contemning all the vanities of the world, did think that this was the better part, which they followed after with so much diligence and patience as they did.

Hear me a few words, you proud and self-conceited sinners, that will plead for your ungodly ways. and plead against a holy life, and quarrel with the most faithful administrations of your pastors. It is a matter of everlasting moment that you and me do differ about; and which of us is most likely to be in the right? I confess I am a weak and ignorant man; but is the sottish, ungodly quarreller any wiser than I am? How camest thou man to thy knowledge, that thou thinkest thyself wiser than me, and all the pastors of the church? My knowledge, that is but little, hath cost me almost forty years hard study. Hast thou read, and meditated, and studied more? Hadst thou better helps and means of knowledge? God usually giveth his gifts in the painful use of means. If I should think myself wiser in thy trade, and able to control thee, thou wouldst judge me a self-conceited fool. What hast thou done for thy knowledge that I have not done? Hast thou prayed for it day and night? So have I. Hast thou had any private way of learning that no man knoweth? Truly I have marvelled at the faces of many ignorant, careless men, that they do not blush when we have thus expostulated with them, when they quarrel with their teachers, and set against them with as brazen a face as if they were all doctors, or had studied forty years, and we were as they are; yea, as if they were wiser than all the apostles, doctors, and pastors of the church. Were it not a wonder indeed if God should give more knowledge about the matters of salvation to a sensual, voluptuous gentleman, or to an idle drone, or a fellow that scarce ever read over the Bible, and to such as live a worldly, fleshly, and ungodly life, than to all his ministers and servants that love his laws, and meditate in them day and night, and live in prayer, and other holy exercises, and make it their daily care and business, to conform their hearts and lives to the

holy doctrine which they study? Surely God will sooner reveal his mind to a diligent searcher, that feareth and loveth him, than to a lustful epicure, or a drunken, swearing, worldly sot. He that every day abuseth the Holy Ghost that should be his Teacher, is not so likely to come to knowledge, as he that humbly learneth and obeyeth him. It is a strange evidence that most wicked men do give us to prove themselves wiser than their teachers; when they can scarce give us a wise account of the principles of religion contained in a catechism, they will prove themselves wise by despising wisdom, and railing at the wise. They prove themselves learned by reproaching the learned. They prove themselves godly enough to be saved, by hating and scorning them that are godly; and prove themselves the servants of Christ, by speaking against his service. They prove themselves wise enough to teach or quarrel with their teachers, by refusing to learn, and to be any wiser, and by babbling out their sinful folly. And when they have done, they prove that their hearts for all this are as good as the most precise, by prating against that holiness which is the only health and goodness of the heart, and by shewing us to our grief that they neither know what goodness is, nor what is in their hearts. They prove to us that they have hopes for all this, of being saved and seeing the face of God, by hating them that are pure in heart, that have the promise of seeing his face; Matt. v. 8. and by reviling or forsaking the way of salvation, and by shewing us on their souls the open marks of the wrath of God, and of a state of condemnation. This is the devil's logic; and this is the wisdom of the wicked. They may next go further, and prove that they are chaste by reviling chastity; and prove that they are sober by speaking against sobriety, and by wallowing in their vomit; or prove that they know all arts, and trades, and sciences by reviling them. And as they now prove that they are the freemen of Christ by shewing us the devil's fetters upon them, so if they hold out, they will shortly have nothing to prove themselves in heaven, but by shewing us the flames of hell which they endure.

If therefore all the holiest and wisest men on earth may be admitted to be witnesses, then holiness must be your best, and all things else be nothing worth in comparison of it.

5. Moreover, if yet you would have more witnesses, shall

those be heard that have tried both states, the state of sin, and the state of holiness? and that have gone both ways; and therefore are able to speak to us by experience?

If you were to take advice about any worldly business, you would choose a man of experience for your counsellor; an experienced physician for your bodies; and an experienced tradesman for your work. You will sooner believe a traveller that hath seen the places he speaks of, (if he be honest,) than another. Godly men have tried both ways: alas! they have known, and too much known the way of sin; and they have tried the holy way that you dislike. I think therefore that they are competent witnesses. And if their witness be worth any thing, the cause must go against the ungodly; for their lives tell you their judgment. Their hatred to sin, their diligent seeking after God, their constant endeavours in a holy course, their suffering any thing rather than forsake this holy way, when once they have sincerely chosen it; all these do fully acquaint you with their judgment. Do you think it is for nothing that the holy servants of the Lord, do stick so close to him, and labour so constantly in his work? Surely if they had not found that this way is beyond comparison the best, you might draw them from it, into a state of ungodliness again; at least fire, and sword, and torment might persuade them to forsake it. Something he findeth in it that is good, that will let go his life and all the world for it.

What say you now? have you any just exceptions against the testimony of these experienced men? The ungodly cannot be competent witnesses; for they have tried but one side: they have had experience of a profane, a fleshly, worldly life; but they never yet tried a holy life. And therefore how should they be fit to tell you what good is in the way of God, which they never travelled in? Or what gain is in the heavenly treasure, which they never traded for? Or what beauty is in the face of Christ and glory, which they never had an eye of faith to see? Or what sweetness is in the hidden manna, which they never tasted? If you say that many that have tried the way of godliness, have turned from it, and are against it; I beseech you weigh my answer.

1. It is not one of a hundred that doth so, no, not in these apostatizing times, when all seducers are let loose.

And is one man's judgment more regardable than a hundred, yea, many hundred?

2. Nay, it is no one at all! Those that you say turn off, are only such as tried an opinionative religiousness, and some of the outward duties of Christianity, but they never tried the power of a living, rooted faith, nor the predominant love of God in the soul, nor a living hope of the heavenly glory, nor the sweetness of a heavenly life, nor the mortification of the fleshly interest, and true self-denial. These are the vital parts of Christianity, which these few apostates never tried; though some of them have had some acquired counterfeits of them, and some good gifts of common grace, and think that none had more than they had.

Sinner, I beseech thee for the Lord's sake, deal faithfully with thy poor soul, when all lies at the stake. Wilt thou take the judgment of a swaggerring gallant, or a scoffing, worldly, or ungodly sot, that none of them ever truly tried a state of holiness: and wilt thou refuse the judgment of God, and of all his servants that have tried it? Go to any godly man, and ask him which of these ways he hath found by experience to be best; and hear what he will say to thee. He will be ashamed to hear thee make a question of it. He will tell thee, 'Alas! friend, I was once deceived by sin, and deceived with the pleasure of my flesh, and the glittering glory and riches of this world, as you are now. I once was a stranger to the life of faith, and the hopes of heaven, and the holiness of the saints. But it was by the mere delusion of the devil, and it was the fruit of the blindness and deadness of my heart. I knew not what I did, nor where I stood, nor what I chose, nor what I set light by! I never well considered of the matter, but carelessly followed the sway of my fleshly inclination and desires! But now I see I was the devil's slave, and my pleasures were my fetters, and my own corrupt affections were my bondage; and now I find that I did but delude my soul; I got nothing by all that the world did for me, but provision for my after-sorrows; I had been now in torments if I had but died in that condition. I would not be again in the case that I was in for all this world, or a thousand such worlds! That life that once I thought the best, hath cost me dear, even the breaking of my heart; and a thousand thousandfold dearer would have

cost me, if the dearest blood and recovering grace of my dearest Lord had not prevented it. O had I not been unspeakably beholden to the mercy of the Lord, even to that mercy which I then made light of, I had been undone for ever; I had been laid under everlasting desperation before this. Now I find that there is no life so sweet as that which I then was so loath to choose! Now it is my only grief that I was holy no sooner, and can be no more holy than I am. O that I had more of that quickening, comforting, saving grace! O that I were further from my former sinful, fleshly state! O that I could get nearer God, though I parted with all the prosperity of this world! I now find what I lost by my continuing in sin so long; but then I knew it not. O friend, as you love your soul, take warning by me, and make use of my experience, and give up yourself to God betimes! This, or to this purpose, would the answer of an experienced person be; if you should ask him, which is the better way?

But if you say, that 'thus we would be ourselves the judges, and bring the matter into our own hands; I answer you, 1. It is true we would be ourselves your helpers, and do the best we could for your salvation: and if you will neither help yourselves, nor give us leave to help you, take what you get by it; we have done our part.

But 2. I will not yet so part with you. I will further make you this reasonable offer. I demand of thee, whoever thou art that readest these words, Whether thou know of any man on earth that thou thinkest to be a wiser man than thyself? If not, thou art so like the devil in pride, that no wonder if thou be near him in malignity and misery. If thou do know of any wiser than thyself, go with me, or with some faithful minister to that man, and ask him, Whether a diligent, holy life be not much better than any other life on earth? And if he do not say as I say here, and as Christ saith in my text, that 'the godly choose the better part,' or else if I prove him not a very sot before thy face, I will give thee leave to brand my understanding in thy esteem, with the notes of infamy and contempt.

Yea, more than so, I will allow thee to go to one that differeth from me in the way of his religion. Ask an Anabaptist, if thou think him more impartial, whether a holy and heavenly heart and life be not the best? and try whether he will not say as I do. Ask those that you call Epis-

copal, or Presbyterian, or Independents, or Separatists : ask an Arminian, or one of the contrary mind : yea, ask a Papist, and see whether he will not say as I do. It is true, they are every one of them of minds somewhat different about some points in the order and manner of their seeking God. But all of them, that are but sober men, will confess as with one mouth, that God should be loved above all, and sought and served above all, and that all should live a holy, diligent, heavenly life.

2. But yet if all this will not satisfy you, I will come yet lower. Who is it that you would have to be judge or witness in this case ? Is it thy malignant, or worldly, or drunken, and ungodly friend ? I am contented that the case be referred even to him, and to as many of them as thou wilt, upon condition that he will but first try the way that he is to judge of. Let him but make an unfeigned trial of a life of holy faith, and love, and obedience, and self-denial, as long as I have done, and we will receive his testimony. Nay more, let him thus try a life of holiness, (inwardly and outwardly,) but one year ; yea, or but one month, or day, or hour, and we will take his testimony. But to be judged by a man in a matter of salvation, that speaks of what he never knew nor tried one hour, but speaks against he knows not what, this is a motion too bad to be made to a very bedlam.

6. If yet you are not resolved which is the better part and way, to whom do you desire to refer it ? Shall heathens, Jews, and Infidels be judges ? Why if they be, they will give the cause against you. Jews and most of the heathen world do profess to believe a life to come, where some are happy and some are miserable ; and they commonly profess that all men should obey their Makér, and make it their chiefest care and labour in this life to be happy in the next : heathens will confess this. And yet I suppose you will easily confess that these men are none of the fittest judges. The way to life by Jesus Christ they do not understand. But that the world is vanity, and nothing to be preferred before our happiness in the world to come, this they will commonly acknowledge. And if the lives of the most of them contradict this profession, yet still they are forced to confess the truth ; and truth is not the less truth, because they that confess it will not obey it. Nay, what greater testimony can you wish to silence your unbelieving thoughts, than

the witnesses of the enemies of the truth, who as they condemn themselves by bearing witness to that which they refuse to practise, so shall their witness aggravate your condemnation, if you will live below it. What, are you Christians, and yet refuse to come up in your choice and lives to the doctrine of heathens and infidels?

7. I know you will think at least that those heretics that are daily bawling against us, will not be partial on our side. If you think that this doctrine is contrived by us for any ends or interests of our own, hearken then to our enemies. These railing Quakers that can scarce tell how to speak a word of the ministers of Christ, but what is the spawn of venomous, fiery, bitter malice, do for all this cry up holiness of life. Though they corrupt the doctrine of Christ so odiously, and speak like heathens in many of their ecstasies and writings, yet do they openly cry down your sensual, worldly ways. Do you not hear how they rail at us for your sakes that are vicious and ungodly, and tell us that you are the fruit and shame of our ministry? Though these words be the fruit and shame of their malicious heresy (for all the world may know that it is our daily work to procure your conversion, and that you keep your sins and refuse a holy, heavenly life, in despite of us), yet I must tell you that these wretches shall condemn you. The streets and congregations have heard them cry out against your ungodly lives, and yet you will not turn to God. Must good and bad, must ministers and raging heretics give in their testimony against you, and yet will you not be satisfied and come in?

8. If yet you know not the better part, to whom will you appeal? Will you go to the multitude and put it to the vote, not only among Christians, but throughout the world? Truly there is no great reason for this, when most men are so blind and wicked; but yet if you should, they would go against you, twenty, if not a hundred to one. I know well enough that when it comes to practice, they will not live a holy life, and shew thereby a root of bitterness. But if you ask them what their judgment is, whether God or the world, whether heaven or earth, whether holiness or sin be best and to be chosen, most men are against you, and would give it you as their judgment under their hands, that God and everlasting life should be first sought. Though by this confession they condemn themselves, yet is it their confession. As I told

you before, the Jews are for this doctrine ; the Turks and other Mahometans are for it ; most of the heathen world is for it, doctrinally, though they will not practise it. Only there are three sorts against it in the world, that ever I heard of. One sort are the Cannibals that eat men's flesh, and go naked, and live like beasts, and never heard of another life ; and some such savages as they. Another sort are a few of the heathen philosophers and their followers, that differ in this from all the rest. A third sort is here and there a debauched apostate, that by the righteous judgment of God are so far forsaken by his grace, for their pride and falsehood against the truth, that they have lost the belief of a life to come, and live under the visible plagues of God upon their souls, as men that have sinned wilfully against the truth, and have " no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful looking for of judgment and fire that shall devour the adversary ;" Heb. vi. 6, 7. x. 26. And are near the state of the devils themselves that are reserved in the chains of spiritual darkness to the judgment of the great day ; Jude 6. Job xxi. 30. And will you take the judgment of here and there a forlorn wretch, a deplorate apostate, an epicure, or a country of inhuman cannibals, before the judgment of the most wise and godly, and of almost all the world ? What excellency hath the understanding of these singular men, that it should be so valued above all others ? You know partly in this place, who they be that are of this opinion. And is their number, or wisdom, or conversation such as should move you to be of their opinion ? Shall half a dozen desperate apostates of ungodly lives seem wiser to you than all the world ? And yet I am persuaded that if you go to any, even of these few apostates, whatever they think, they will confess that a holy life is best. And yet have you not witness enough against you ?

9. Who then shall be the judge ? Shall we appeal to the very things themselves, and to the daily experience of the world ? You see that worldlings labour for the wind. You see that all their care and pains will not avoid the stroke of death, that turneth the proudest flesh into a clod, and maketh dirt of the greatest prince. You see that wealth and honour do but mock men, and leave them in the grave to darkness and corruption. And when you are sure that this will be the upshot of all your fleshly pleasure and worldly gains, are you not satisfied past all doubt, that the smallest hopes

or possibility of another life should be sought with far more care than this?

10. If none of these witnesses be regarded by thee, I know not whom to appeal to, but thyself! And wilt thou needs thyself decide the case? Hast thou knowledge and experience, honesty and impartiality enough to fit thee to be judge? If thou hadst, thou wouldst make no doubt of it, but have been resolved for heaven and holiness ere this. Thy unresolvedness proves thee blind and partial, and very much forsaken by the Spirit of light. And should such a one be judge? But go to, I will much refer thy case to thyself (reserving still the final judgment to the Lord) upon these just and reasonable conditions.

(1.) Wilt thou first thyself but use those necessary means for knowledge, in reading, fasting, praying, watching, meditation, conference with the wise, and such like, as all those do that come to ripe and saving knowledge? If I refer my health to thee as my physician, thou must not refuse to try my pulse, and use the means to find out the disease. Wouldst thou be my lawyer, and refuse to read my evidences, and study my case? And wilt thou needs be judge thyself of the matters of thine own felicity or misery, and yet refuse to read, and hear, and pray, and meditate, and use the necessary means of understanding? Wilt thou lie in bed and work out thy salvation? Wilt thou make use of no ones eyes but thy own, and yet wilt thou wink or draw the curtains, or shut the windows, and cast away thy spectacles, and neither come into the sunshine, nor use a candle? This is but to say, I will wilfully condemn my soul, and none shall hinder me.

(2.) But yet another condition I must propose. If thou wilt but (as I said before of others) a while make trial of a holy life, and try in thyself what faith, and hope, and charity are, and try what self-denial is, I will then refer the matter to thyself. Go back from God if thou find any reason for it; and turn from Christ, and heaven, and holiness, if thou do not like them. But if thou wilt needs be the judge, and wilt not be persuaded to try the thing, thou art a partial, self-deceiving judge.

(3.) But if this much cannot be obtained, at least be considerate in thy judging. If thou wilt but take thyself aside from the noise of worldly vanities and deceits, and commune

seriously with thy heart, and bethink thee as before the Lord, and as one that knows he must shortly die, whether heaven or earth should be sought most carefully, and whether God or thy flesh should be served most resolvedly and diligently; and if thou wilt but dwell so long upon these manlike thoughts till they are digested, and truth have time to shew its face, I dare then leave the question to thyself. The next time that the sermon or any affliction comes near thee and awakeneth thy conscience, do but withdraw thyself into secret, and soberly bethink thee of the matter, what hopes thou hast from the world, and what thou mayst have from God; what time is, and what eternity is, and give but conscience leave to speak, and then I will venture the issue upon thy conscience. For thee I mean, though I must stick to a better judge myself. Doth not conscience sometimes tell thee, that the holiest persons are the wisest, and that thy labour is more like atlast to be lost and repented of, than theirs? Doth not conscience sometimes make thee wish that thou wert but in as safe a case as they; and that thou mightest but die the death of the righteous, and that thy last end might be as theirs?

(4.) But if all this will not serve the turn, thou shalt be judge thyself; but it shall be when thou art more capable of judging. If God by grace shall change thy heart, I will stand to thy judgment. If he do not, when thy graceless, guilty soul shall pass out of thy pampered, dirty flesh, and appear before the dreadful God, I will then leave the case to thy conscience to judge of. To all eternity it shall be partly left to the judgment of thy conscience, whether sin or holiness be better? and whether saints or careless sinners were the wiser? and whether it had not been better for thee to have spent that life in preparing for thy endless life, which thou spentest in slighting it, and caring for the world and flesh. Then thou shalt be judge thyself of these matters; but under a more severe and righteous Judge. And so as shall make thy tearing heart to wish with many a thousand groans, that thou hadst judged wiser in time.

But because that judgment will be to desperation, and too late for hope or any help, let conscience speak when thou liest sick, and seest that thou art a dying man. Then judge thyself whether a holy or a worldly life be better; and whether it had not been thy wiser course to have sowed to the Spirit, that so thou mayst reap everlasting life, than to have

sowed to the flesh, from which thou now lookest to reap no better than corruption. Be not deceived. God is not mocked. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap:" Gal. vi. 6, 7.

But because it will be very late to stay till thy own death draw so near thee, go but to thy neighbours that lie in sickness, looking for the stroke of death. Yea, to thy companions in sin and folly, and ask them then which way is better. Ask them then which is the better part. Whether now they had rather be the most holy saints, or such as they have been? Whether now they had not rather they had spent their time in the most careful seeking for everlasting life, than in doing as they have done? Say to thy old companion now, 'Brother, I see you are near your end; the mortal stroke of death is coming; you are now leaving all the pleasures of this world. I pray you tell me now your judgment, whether mirth, and sport, and feasting, and drinking, and wealth, and honour, be more to be sought than life eternal? and whether hearing and reading the word of God, and praying, and meditating, and flying from sin, be as bad or as needless a thing as we have formerly taken it to be? Had you rather appear before the Lord in the case of those that we derided as Puritans, and too precise for making such ado about salvation, or in the case that you and I have lived in?' Ask but this question to thy old companions, and try whether the consciences of almost all that reproach their end, do not bear witness against ungodliness, and do not justify the holy diligence of the saints. It is but two days since, a poor drunkard of a neighbouring parish being ready to pass out of this world, did send hither, and to other parishes, in the terrors of his soul, to desire our congregations to take warning by him, and to strive with God if possible, for some mercy for his soul, that was passing in terrors into another world because of the guilt of his odious sin.

Well, sirs, I have gone along with you to all the creatures in this world, that have any fitness to judge in this case, and if all these will not serve, we must go to another world for judgment, or stay till you come there.

11. And really do you think if we could speak with angels or departed souls, that they would not consent with God and all believers in their testimony? O how they would rebuke their madness, that make any doubt of so great, so plain, so

sure a truth as this, of the necessity and the excellency of a holy life. None are so fully resolved of this question as they that have tasted the end of both, and past the righteous judgment of the Lord. They that are feeling the anguish of their consciences, and the tormenting displeasure of Almighty God, are satisfied by this time, whether the godly or ungodly were the wiser men, and whether sanctity or sensuality were the better course. They that are rejoicing with Christ in glory, are satisfied perfectly in this question, and are far from repenting of their choice ; Luke xvi. Christ tells you enough, in the case of the rich man and Lazarus, how men judge in the life to come.

12. But if all these witnesses will not serve you, what shall we say to you? Whom will you choose to be your counsellor? There is none left that I remember, unless you will go to the devil for advice. But against this I have told you enough before. Will he speak for holiness that is a spirit of uncleanness ; and will he shew thee heaven that labour-eth purposely to hide it from thee, till thou have lost it? or will he let thee see the odiousness and danger of thy sin, when it is the snare and bait by which he hopeth to undo thee? But yet for all this, let me tell thee that thou mayst learn even from the tempting enemy himself, the truth of that which I am now asserting. For as the devil himself believeth it when he persuadeth thee not to believe it, so the very nature and manner of his temptations may help thee to perceive that heaven is attainable, and holiness is the only way. Would he make so much ado about it, to keep thee from the believing it, and seeking it, if there were not a heaven for thee to find? Why is he so eager to draw thee unto sin, if sin be not hurtful to thee? Dost thou not feel the importunity of his temptations? It is easy to observe them. Why is he so much against a holy doctrine, and a holy life, and a holy people, if it were not that he knows the necessity and worth of holiness for thy good? The actions of a knowing enemy may do very much to acquaint us with the truth. Besides this, he hath oft appeared in bodily shapes (as I am able to prove by undeniable evidence); sometimes to entice men to sin, and sometimes to be God's executioner to afflict them for it, and sometimes to make a covenant with witches and conjurers for their souls, as many a hundred of them have confessed at their death. And why should he be so desirous

of thy soul, if thou hadst none to lose? or so desirous to deceive thee, and deprive thee of salvation, if there were none for thee to lose? and if this were not the chief concernment of thy soul, why should thy chief enemy so much regard it? Thou seest that he is not so careful to deprive thee of thy fleshly pleasure. He careth not how much thou hast of this. The more the glutton is pleased with his cheer, and the more the drunkard delighteth in his cups, and the more the fornicator is pleased in his filthiness, and every voluptuous person in his voluptuousness, the devil is pleased so much the more. He cares not if thou have all the kingdoms of the world, if he can deprive thee of the everlasting kingdom. Nor will he grudge thee the glory and honour of the world, if he can but keep thee from the heavenly glory. He will allow thee the hypocrite's reward, which is the applause of men, if he can but keep thee from the saint's reward, which is the favour of God. He cares not how much of thy good things thou hast here, if he can deprive thee of the everlasting good. It is his desire that thou have thy portion in this life, that thou mayst miss the believer's portion in the next.—Certainly the devil himself, by his temptations, apparitions, and contracts, doth plainly tell us of a life to come, and what it is that conduceth most to our good or hurt, our joy or torment; and consequently teacheth us what to choose, by tempting us so palpably and eagerly to refuse it.

You see now what a jury of witnesses I have brought in, to testify which is the better part. The devil and the wicked are added to the rest, because you will hear no better witnesses. If you will, here are enough whose testimonies are unquestionable.

But when all is done, it is the Lord that is and will be Judge. All these are but witnesses to dispose thee to receive his sentence. Thou art no believer, till the authority of the word of God will serve to satisfy and resolve thee.

CHAPTER III.

Full proof (in twenty Queries) from Reason itself that there is a Life to come, and Holiness is the way to it, and the Better Part. And that the Gospel is the certain word of God (in fifteen Queries more) with Answers to the Infidel's Objections.

AND by this time I come somewhat nearer to the infidel, and am ready to answer his foregoing question, 'Where shall I find the judgment or testimony of the Lord?' 'O,' saith the unbeliever, 'if I were but sure that there were a life hereafter, where the godly and wicked shall be differently rewarded, as the Scripture speaks, then I must confess he were no better than a madman that would prefer this world, or wilfully live in sin, and would not seek heaven with all his might, and be as earnest in holiness as the strictest saints! But I am not sure that this is true, and that there is any such difference after death, to be expected.'

Answ. Alas, poor wretch! Art thou at that pass? Hast thou so far lost the knowledge of God, and of thyself, and of thy end and business here, and of the word and works of God, as to turn worse than Jew, or Turk, or heathen, even to think thyself a beast, that hath no life nor happiness but this? If this be thy case, I cannot now stand to deal with thee according to thy necessity. I am now dealing with them that confess a life hereafter. And because we cannot in all our writings repeat over the same things, I desire thee to peruse what I have already written for such as thee, in the second part of "The Saint's Rest," and in a treatise called, "The Unreasonableness of Infidelity;" and at present take only some brief advertisements for thy conviction.

Query 1. And first, whereas you say, you are not sure of a life hereafter, I demand of you, Whether you are sure that there is not such a life? I am sure you are not. If you think you are (which none but a debauched man can think, that hath put out the eye of natural light), let us hear your proof, and you shall soon be told the vanity of it. But if you are not sure that there is no such life, then I would know of you, Whether a possibility of such everlasting things deserve not greater care and diligence than is used by the most holy saint on earth? You say, you are not sure that there is a heaven

for saints. But what if it prove true (as nothing more true), will you sit still, and lose it for you know not what? or for want of a little care in seeking it? You say, you know not whether there be a hell for ungodly men, or no. But what if it prove true (as certainly it will), where are you then? Will you venture yourselves upon the possibility of such an endless loss and torment, which now you might on reasonable terms escape? You will confess that a possibility of a kingdom should be more regarded than the certainty of a pin or a feather. And a possibility of some tormenting disease but for twenty years, should be more carefully avoided than the certain stinging of a nettle.

Query 2. You say, You are not sure that there is a life to come. But are you sure to continue the life you have? Or is it any great matter that you are called to lose, for the obtaining of that life, that you are not sure of? You know the contrary, or easily may do. You are sure that you have not long to be here. Nothing more sure than that you will shortly die. And you are not sure but it may be to-morrow. And while you are here, it is nothing worth the naming (but what hath reference to another life) that you do possess. What have you to your flesh, but meat, and drink, and sleep, and lust, and such kind of bestial delights, which is better to be without than have, if we could also be without the need of them. Can you call these by the name of happiness, without renouncing your reason and experience? You say, you know not what God will do for you hereafter. But you know what sin and the world will do for you here. Even nothing but hold you in a transitory dream, and then dismiss you into rottenness and dust. If you were not certain of another life, as long as you are most certain of the vanity of this, doth not reason tell you, that a possible everlasting glory, should be preferred before a certain vanity? If you were not sure to get any thing by God and a holy life, yet as long as you are sure, even as sure as you live, that you can lose nothing by it, that is worth the talking of, is not the case then resolved, which way is the better? If you say, you shall lose your fleshly pleasures; I answer, They are not worth the having. The pleasure doth not countervail the trouble; no more than the delight of scratching (as I said before) doth countervail the trouble of the itch. Moderation and temperance is sweeter than excess. If too much be bet-

ter than enough, and that which hurteth nature better than that which helpeth it, then self-destroying and fighting against your bodily welfare, would be best. Is not a temperate meal more pleasant than a gluttonous surfeit, that is worse to the feeling of the glutton the next day ? Is not common food that costeth not much, and kindleth no troublesome itch in a man's appetite, more pleasant than enticing, costly dainties ? Is not so much drink as nature requireth, much better than that which makes the stomach sick, the brain witless, if not the purse pennyless, and breedeth many noisome diseases to the flesh, and hasteneth death, that hasteth of itself ? By that time the gaudy apparel, the dainty fare, and drink is paid for ; and by that time the flesh hath suffered all that pain and sickness that are the ordinary followers of excess, methinks you should say, that if there were no hell, your sin were a punishment itself, and that in this life, it brings more pain than pleasure, and that such kind of pleasure was not worth the keeping, to the hazard of the least possibility of an everlasting life. Wouldst thou under thy hand and seal, give away thy hopes and possibility of everlasting life, and run the hazard of an everlasting torment for the pleasures of sin, or to avoid the trouble of a holy life ? Why then thou mayst as well even sell it all for pins, or points, or children's rackets. Then thou art as foolish as the worst of witches, that sell their souls to a lying spirit, that whatever he doth promise them, doth pay them with nothing but calamity and deceit. When thou comest to know better what it is that the world can do for thee, thou wilt then confess there was nothing in it, that should not have been slighted for the smallest hopes of an everlasting life. Dost thou think the world will be much better to thee for the time to come than hitherto it hath proved ? Deceive not thyself ; it will prove the same ; yea, and worse at last. Look back now upon all the pleasures of thy life, from thy infancy to this day, and tell me what the better thou art for them. If this were the hour of thy death, would all the profits or pleasures of thy life be any comfort to thee, or make thy death a whit the easier ? Have the dust or bones of the carcasses of voluptuous sinners any comfort or benefit now, by all the pleasure of their former sin ? Surely I need not all these words to a man of common understanding, to convince him that if heaven were as uncertain as the infidel doth imagine,

a man of reason should venture all that he hath upon the mere possibility ; because his all indeed is nothing, and he is sure he can be no loser by the bargain, it being not so much as the venture of a pin for the possibility of a crown.

Query 3. But that is not all. What if I shall prove to thee past all denial, that even in this life, holiness is far the most delightful, gainful, honourable life, and that the ungodly live in a continual misery? Will not this serve turn to convince thee that a holy life should be undertaken for a mere possibility of heaven, if we had no more? Read but the proofs of this anon, and if I make it not good to thee, call me a deceiver. But if I prove that holiness is the sweetest life on earth, and heaven the sure reward hereafter ; and that sin is a misery itself to the sinner, and hell the certain punishment hereafter, then see that thou confess that God is a good Master, and the devil a bad one ; for at last thou shalt be forced to confess it.

Query 4. Well ! You say, you are not sure that there is another life for man. But have you used the means to make it sure to you, and to be well resolved ? If you have, then you have impartially searched, and prayed, and meditated on the word of God, and heard what can be said by wiser men, for that which you say you are not sure of ; but if you have trusted to your own understanding, and neglected meditation, prayer, inquiry, and other needful means, what wonder then if you be uncertain, even whether there be a heaven or hell ? It is no disgrace to physic, or astronomy, or music, or languages, or navigation, but to you, if you say that you are uncertain of all their conclusions, when you never studied them, or at least never studied them with that diligence and patience as those must do that will attain a certain satisfying knowledge.

Query 5. Moreover, if you are so uncertain of a life to come, I would ask you, Whether in all your search and study, you have behaved yourselves as learners, or rather as proud, self-conceited men, that think themselves wise enough before they learn, to try and judge their books and teachers. If this be your case, no wonder if you be infidels. If you come with such a disposition to read a book of astronomy, or physic, you will never learn. If you go to any schoolmaster, or to learn any language or science, and think yourselves able before you have learnt them, to try and judge your

teacher and all the books you read, and so will reject all that you do not understand, or agreeth not with your former conceits, you will sooner prove doting fools than scholars, and sooner be the derision of rational men, than come to the knowledge which you pretend to seek. Come to Christ's school as little children in meekness and humility, and a willingness to be taught, and patiently continue in the use of means till learning can be obtained, before you think yourselves fit to censure the truth of God which you are learning, and then tell me whether God doth not resolve you.

Query 6. Moreover, I would know of you that doubt so of the life to come, Whether you have been true to so much light as you received, and have lived in obedience to the truth which God revealed to you. Or rather whether you have not wilfully and knowingly lived in some secret or open sin, and striven against the light and Spirit of Christ, and abused the truth which you have known, and used violence with your own consciences? If so (which it is ten to one is your case), it is no wonder if you are infidels, forsaken of God, whom you first forsook, and given up to pride and self-conceit.

Query 7. If man have no life to live but this, and no further end of his actions than a beast, nor any further account to give, then he is indeed but one of the higher sort of beasts, differing but gradually from a dog, as a dog doth from a swine. And if this be indeed thy judgment of thyself, I demand, Whether or no thou be content to be used as a beast? Wilt thou not take it ill to be called or judged a beast by another? Or wouldst thou have others judge better of thee than thyself? Wouldst thou have no man regard thy prosperity or life any more than a beast is to be regarded? A beast hath no property, no not of that which nature hath given him. You accuse not yourselves of doing him any wrong, when you deprive the sheep of his fleece, nor when you make a constant drudge of your horse or ox. And do you think it lawful before God, for any one that can but master you, to do the like by you? To strip you naked, and to make packhorses of you, and use you as their slaves? We take it to be no sin to take away the lives of beasts, if it be but for our own commodity. We kill oxen, and calves, and sheep, and swine, and fowl, and fishes for our daily food. And is it lawful before God for others to do so by you?

Should nothing restrain them but want of power to overcome you? If you say that you are beasts, as beasts you should be used.

Query 8. Moreover I would know of you, Whether you think that there is any other world, which spiritual inhabitants do possess? If you say no, you go against all reason and experience. Against experience, because that many a hundred witches, and many apparitions and haunted houses have put the matter out of question (for all that many reports of such things have been false). And against all reason, because we see that this inferior world is every where replenished with inhabitants. The earth hath men and beasts, the air hath birds, the water hath fishes. And can a man of common reason then, think that the superior regions which we see, and which we see not (which for greatness, and for splendour and excellency, are a thousandfold above this earth), should all be uninhabited and destitute! and that there are not creatures also there, for excellency and number incomparably beyond the inhabitants of this lesser, lower world! Certainly nothing is made in vain, nor are the works of God so monstrously disproportioned and discomposed, as for the more noble parts to be only for the baser. The heavens that are over us, and all the vast and most excellent parts of the creation, have a use that is answerable to their excellency. God makes not cottages to be inhabited, and palaces and cities to lie waste and desert to no use.

But if you grant there is another world proportionably replenished with creatures, you may easily see from thence a probability, that man shall be translated thither. Why not the soul of man, as well as those spirits that in assumed shapes have made their appearance unto man? As all things ripen to their perfection, why should it seem any more improbable that the soul shall pass hence into the world of spirits, than that the chicken shall come out of the shell, and the infant out of the womb, into so wide and light a world as this, when before they were shut up in a narrow darkness, and never heard nor knew any thing of that world which they enter into?

Query 9. Do you know why it is that God hath given man that knowledge, and freewill, and capacity to seek another life which beasts have not, if he be intended for no other life than beasts? If God be not most wise, he is not God.

If he be, then he maketh not so excellent faculties as these in vain, but fitteth all his creatures to their uses. Every workman will do so by his work. Why is a knife made keen, but to cut with? And what are the wheels of your watch or clock made for but to shew you the hour of the day? Look now into the whole frame of the soul of man, and judge by its aptitude what it is made for.

(1.) Man is capable of knowing that there is a God, and knowing his attributes, which beasts are not, because they be not made to enjoy him.

(2.) Man is capable of knowing his relation to this God, that he is our Creator, and we his creatures; he our Lord, and we his own; he our Ruler, and we his subjects; he our Benefactor, and we his beneficiaries. And we are capable of knowing our duty in these several relations. And certainly all this is not in vain.

(3.) Man is capable of knowing that the everlasting love of God is that alone that can make him happy. And why would God shew him this, if he were not capable of enjoying it? Reason tells men that nothing here can make us happy, and that God can do it.

(4.) Man is capable of knowing that certain duties are to be performed in order to the pleasing of his Lord, and what those duties are; which would not be if we were not capable of pleasing him, and so of being happy in him.

(5.) Man is made capable of desiring after the everlasting love of God; and that above all things in this world. And God hath not made such desires in vain.

(6.) Man is capable of loving God as an object everlastingly to be enjoyed, and that above all other things.

(7.) Man also is capable of referring all the creatures unto God, and using all things but as means to this everlasting end. Thus to believers. And surely all this is not in vain.

(8.) Man is a creature that cannot regularly be moved according to his nature, to the performance of his duty to God and man, unless it be by motives fetched from the life to come. Take off that poise, and all his orderly motions will soon cease. Nothing below such everlasting things are fit or sufficient morally to govern him, and cause him to live as man should live.

(9.) He is possessed of actual fears of everlasting punish-

ment, and shall never perfectly overcome these fears by his greatest unbelief.

(10.) He is capable of fetching his highest pleasures from the forethoughts of everlasting happiness, and receiving from hence his encouragement in well-doing and foretaste of the reward. Now this being the natural frame of man, as is past denial (when brutes have no such thing at all), let reason judge whether the God of nature have made this nature of man in vain, that we see hath suited every other creature to its use; our horses to carry us, and our ox to draw for us, and the earth to bear its several fruits for them and us. And hath he mistaken only in the making of man, and gone beyond his own intention, and fitted him for those uses and enjoyments that he was never meant for? These are not imputations to be cast upon the most wise and gracious God.

Query 10. Moreover I demand of you, What is the end of man, and all these special faculties, if there be no life for him after this? Either he hath an end which he is to intend, or he hath none. If none, then he hath nothing to do in the world. For all actions of man are nothing else but the intending of some end, and the choice and use of means for the attaining it. Man must lie down and sleep out his days, if this be true that he hath no end. Nay, sleep itself hath some. And he cannot choose but intend some end and seek it, if he would never so fain, unless he would take some opiate stupefying potion, or run mad. And he that made him also, and placed him here, had some end in it. For if man had thus no end, he could have no maker or efficient cause. For every rational efficient intendeth an end in all his works. (And he that made men rational, is eminently much more knowing than his creature.) And if we had no maker, then we have no being, and so are no men.

But if man unquestionably have an end, it is either something that is more noble or baser than himself, and some state that it is better or worse than that in which he seeks his end. Baser it cannot be; for that were monstrous, that baser things should be the end of the more noble. Beasts are made for man, and therefore not man for beasts. The earth is made for beasts and men, and therefore we are not made for the earth. Our means is not our end. If you grant that we are made for the God that made us (as nothing more sure), then how is it that God can be our end if there be no

life but this ? 1. Here we are but in seeking him, and still are forced to complain that we fall short. Here we are but in the use of means. 2. We find that our knowledge, desires, and love will here reach no higher than to carry us on towards that perfection that is in our eye, and not to satisfy the soul. The creature that doth attain his end, hath rest in it, and is better than before. But we have nothing here like rest, and should be in a worse condition hereafter, if we had no more. 3. Here we sin against the Lord, and wrong him more than we serve him. We know but little of him and his work ; and serve and praise him but a little, and not according to the capacity of our nature. And therefore if he have not a higher end for us, and we a higher end to seek than any is in this world to be found, our natures seem to be in vain. For my part, though it be in weakness, I must needs say it is my trade and daily work to serve my God, and seek after an immortal blessedness. And if I thought that there were no such thing to be had, and no such use for me, I must needs stand still, and look about me, or in my practice unman myself by a brutish life, as I had brutified myself in my estimation and intention. For what could I find to do in the world ? What should I do with my reason and knowledge, or any faculty above a beast, if I had no higher a work and end than beasts ? Verily, if I had lost the hopes of another life, I knew not what to do with myself in the world ! but must become some other creature, and live some other kind of life, than now I live.

Query 11. Moreover, I desire you to consider, ‘ Whether it be credible to a man of reason, that God made his noblest creature in this world with a nature that should be a necessary misery and vexation to itself above all the misery of the baser creatures ? and that the wiser any man is, the more miserable he must needs be ? ’

This is not credible. Yet thus would it be, if there were no life but this. For, (1.) The knowledge that man hath of a superior good (which beasts have not) would tantalize him and torment him. To know it, and must not partake of it, is to be used as a horse that is tied near his provender, which he must not reach.

(2.) The love, and desires, and hopes, that I before described, would all be our vexation. To love and desire that

which we cannot attain, and that with the chief of our affections, is but to make us miserable by virtue.

(3.) To use all those means, and do the duties before-mentioned in vain, when we are not capable of the end, is but to roll a Sisiphus' stone, and to be made to wash black-amores, or to fill a bottomless tub.

(4.) No creature here but man, hath fears of any misery after death, and therefore none would be here so miserable. There is no infidel but must confess, that for aught he knows there may be a life of punishment for the wicked. And this 'may be' will breed more fears in a considerate man, than death itself alone could do.

(5.) Or if there were no fear of that, yet man hath reason to think beforehand of his death, and to think of his abode in darkness, which beasts have not. To think of being turned to a stinking carrion, and to a clod, and so continuing for ever, without any hope of a resurrection, would be matter for continual horror to a considering man, which brutes are not molested with. And wise men that can foresee, would be tormented more than fools. All this is incredible, that God should make his nobler creature to be naturally most miserable; and give him knowledge and affections, and set a certain death, and possible torment continually before his eyes, to torment him, without any remedy! And beside the hoped life hereafter, there is none.

Query 12. 'Do you think that the belief of another life, is needful or useful, to the well governing of this world, or not?' If you say no, (1.) Why then do infidels and brutists say, that religion is but the device of men for the governing of the world? and that without it subjects would not be ruled? You confess by this your frivolous objection, that the world cannot be ruled well without the belief of a life to come.

(2.) And it is most manifest from the very nature of man, and from the common experience in the world, 1. If man be well governed, it must be either by laws containing rewards and penalties, or without. Not without, For, 1. All the world doth find it by experience, that it cannot be; and therefore every commonwealth on earth is governed by laws, either written, customary, or verbal.

2. If the love of virtue for itself should prevail with one

of a thousand, that would be nothing to the government of the world.

3. Nor could any man be effectually induced to love virtue for itself, according to the doctrine of the brutists. For virtue itself is made no virtue by them, but a deformity of the mind, while they overthrow the end, and object, and law, that it is measured and informed by (as I shall more fully open to you anon). It is therefore most certain that no nation is or can be governed as beseemeth man, without proposed punishments and rewards.

And if so, then these must be either temporal punishments and benefits, or such as are to be had in the life to come. That temporal punishments and benefits cannot be motives sufficient for any tolerable (much less perfect or sufficient) government, is a most evident truth. For 1. 'De facto,' we see by experience, that no people live like men that be not governed by the belief of another life. The nations that believe it not, are savages almost all; living naked and bestially, and knowing nothing of virtue or vice, but as they feel the commodity or discommodity to their flesh. They eat the flesh of men, for the most part, and live as brutishly as they believe. And if you say that in China, it is not so, I answer, one part of them there believe the immortality of the soul, and most of them take it as probable, and so the nation hath the government which it hath, from everlasting motives.

And if you say that the ancient Romans had a sufficient government, I answer, 1. The most of them believed a life to come, and it was but a few that denied the immortality of the soul; and therefore it was this that governed the nations. For those that believed another life, had the government of the few that did not believe it, or else the government itself had been more corrupt. 2. And yet the faultiness of their belief appeared in the faultiness of their government. Every tyrant took away men's lives at pleasure. Every citizen that had slaves (which was common) at pleasure killed them, and cast them into the fishponds. The servants secretly poisoned their masters, and that in so great numbers, that Seneca saith, *Epist. 4. ad Lucul.* that "the number of those that were killed by their servants, through treachery, deceit, or force, was as great as of them that were killed by kings;" which was not a few.

2. It is apparent that the world would be a wilderness, and men like wild, ravenous beasts, if they were not governed by motives from the life to come.

1. Because the nature of man is so corrupt and vicious, that we see how prone they are to evil, that everlasting motives themselves are too much ineffectual with the most.

2. Every man naturally is selfish, and therefore would measure all good and evil with reference to themselves, as it was commodious and incommodious to them. And so virtue and vice would not be known, much less regarded.

3. By this means there would be as many ends, and, laws, or rules, as men, and so the world would be all in a confusion.

4. If necessity forced any to combine, it would be but as robbers, and strength would be their law and justice; and he that could get hold of another man's estate, would have the best title.

5. All those that had but strength to do mischief, would be under no law, nor have any sufficient motive to restrain them. What should restrain the tyrants of the world, that rule over many nations of the earth, if they believe no punishment after death, but that their laws and practices should be as impious and bestial, as their lusts can tempt them to desire? What should restrain armies from rapes and cruelty, that may do it unpunished? or popular tumults that are secured by the multitude?

6. And there would be no restraint of any villany that could but be secretly committed. And a wicked wit can easily hide the greatest mischiefs. Poisoning, stabbing, burning houses, defaming, adultery, and abundance the like, are easily kept secret by a man of wit, unless a special providence reveal them (as usually it doth).

7. At least, the probability of secrecy would be so great, and also the probability of sinful advantage, that most would venture.

8. And all those sins would be committed without scruple, which the law of man did appoint no punishment for; as lying, and many odious vices.

9. If one man, or two, or ten, should be deterred from poisoning you, or burning your houses, or killing your cattle, &c. by human laws, a thousand more would be let loose and venture.

10. All the sins of the heart would have full liberty, and a defiled soul have neither cure nor restraint. For the laws and judgments of men extend not to the heart. All the world then might live in the hatred of God, and of their neighbours, and in daily murder, theft, adultery, and blasphemy of the heart. Within they might be as bad as devils, and fear no punishment ; for man can take no cognizance of it. And it is the heart that is the man. You see then what persons the infidels and brutists would have us all be ! What hearts and lives mankind should have according to their laws ! Be devils within ; and murder, and deceive, and commit adultery as much as you will, so you have wit to escape the gallows, and you are scholars fit for such bestial masters.

11. Yea, let me add this one more mischief : Hereby they would destroy all charity and good works, except the very bestial love of those that please men's lust. For no laws of men compel men to the love of God or man ; nor much to good works. Who would do any thing comparatively, that believed not a reward and punishment hereafter ? If we give all that we have to the poor, we can here have no reward but the breath of a man's mouth, which at death we understand not. Take down the everlasting ends and motives, and all good works, and inward virtues too that should produce them, are taken down.

And by this time you may see what a litter of bears, what a pack of ravening dogs, what cannibals the world should be turned into, by the doctrine of the brutists, that deny the life to come.

Well ! but perhaps you will by this time have so much sense, as to confess that threatenings and punishments, hopes and fears of the state of another life are necessary to the wellgoverning of this world. And if so, I desire no more, to satisfy any man that believes there is a God (and that is any man that hath not drowned his wits in sin). For 1. This will then shew that the nature of man is formed for another life ; and God did not make him such in vain. 2. And certainly if everlasting motives must be put into the laws that govern us, and into our hopes and fears, then it is not possible, but such things there are to be expected. For any man to imagine that God would make a world, which he cannot govern but by falsehood and deceit, this is to say that God is no God. For all lying and falsehood comes either from a

want of power, or wisdom, or goodness, when men either cannot make good their words, or otherwise attain their ends; or when they have not wit to know what is, or was, or will be, or when they are so bad, as to be disposed to deceive. But he that ascribeth any of these to God, doth worse than to say that there is no God. If I hate deceit and lying myself; the God that gave me all that little good which I have must hate it more. Dream not of any but a worm, or fool, or impious tyrant, that needs and loves deceit and falsehood to attain their ends. Judge by the frame of heaven and earth, and by that little good that is in good men, whether the living God be one that needs such hellish engines to rule the world.

If therefore in order to the government of mankind we must needs believe a life to come, it is certainly true. And why do you not believe that which government requireth you to believe?

Query 13. Moreover I demand of you, 'Whether you take God indeed to be the Governor of this world, or not?' By 'governor,' I mean properly, one that ruleth the rational creature as such, by moral means, even laws and executions. I exclude not his potential, efficacious operations, but conclude a necessity of moral government. I know a self-conceited, popish infidel hath endeavoured to persuade the world that God's sovereignty and moral government are metaphorical expressions, arising from the misconceivings of weak men; and that wiser men like himself do conceive of God's government only as of an artificer's disposal of his works, that physically accomplisheth all his will. As if God's natural causations, and his moral, were inconsistent; or as if God were not wise and good as well as Almighty; or did not in his government of men demonstrate his sapience in his laws, and his goodness in attractive benefits, as well as his power in mere natural motion; or as if man were not a rational creature, and a free-agent, and were not to be governed according to his nature, by objects suited to his intellect and will, but must be used and ruled like a stone or beast; or as if God could not infallibly attain his ends by a sapiential government, and by preserving the liberty of the will, as well as by a mere necessitating causation! This man was so enamoured upon his supposed skill in physic and metaphysics, that he not only lost his morality, but grew to be such an

enemy to it, as to blot out all true morality, civility, policy, and economy at a dash; and stands with the rest of the proud fraternity, as a monument of God's justice against the proud, so deplorately forsaken even in the reason that he glorieth of, that children may perceive his folly. He that is all for operations of power, as excluding sapiential government by laws, and their just executions, doth think sure that a horse hath more of the image of God than a man. For he is much stronger. Brutish force would be more excellent than the attraction of goodness and the conduct of wisdom, if the government (which is no government) that these men dream of were the most excellent. As he will allow his artificer to shew as much at least of his wit, by making a watch or clock that shall, though by a necessity, move without the finger of the workman continually moving it; so methinks he should allow the infinitely wise and gracious God, to be nevertheless wise or gracious, if he rule the rational free-agent, without a physical necessitation, by a gracious attraction and sapiential conduct, agreeable to the reason and liberty of the creature, as long as we exclude not the co-working of Omnipotency, nor deny the infallibility of divine predefinition, which may be secured with the security of the creature's liberty.

In a word, to deny God to be the Sovereign Governor of the world in proper sense; 1. Is a denying him to be God; it being a term of relation, comprising government, and not of mere nature. When it is commanded us that we have no other gods, and when we are required in the holy covenant to take the Lord for our God, and give up ourselves to him as his people, it most plainly expresseth that his governing authority, or his sovereignty is comprehended in the term God. And indeed, having made a rational, free creature, whose nature requireth moral government, it followeth by necessary resultancy, that he that had sole authority and sufficiency, must be his sovereign.

2. These proud blasphemers that deny God's proper government, do contradict the very drift of Scripture, that calleth him our king and governor, and requireth our subjection and obedience.

3. They deny the being of God's laws, both the law of nature, and the written laws, and so blot out the word of God, and the sense and use of all his works. Though they

allow them a certain physical operation on us, yet as laws they do obliterate them: that is, as they are '*norma officii et judicii*,' our rule of duty and expectation, and God's resolved way of judging.

4. They hereby overthrow all duty as such, and make good actions to be but as the motion of the arrow that hits the white, and to have none but a physical goodness in them. For there can be no proper obedience, where there is no proper government or law.

5. Hereby also they deny all inward virtue: for this also can have but a physical goodness, if government and laws be down.

6. Hereby they deny the being of sin. For where there is no law and government, but mere physical necessitating motion, there is no transgression. And therefore when they make a deal of talk about purging away sin, it is not sin indeed that they mean, but a mere physical disease to be physically expunged.

7. Hereby they deny all the proper judgment of God by Christ at the last day, and make his judgments to be nothing but execution.

Yea, and 8. All proper execution is denied, as vindictive, or remunerative, and so all justice.

9. The authority of every prince on earth is overthrown. For there can be no authority but from God's sovereign authority, any more than any being without derivation from the first being. They may talk to the ignorant of contracts, and people's wills being the original of governing authority, and deify the multitude and make them give that which they never had; but a mean understanding may perceive their folly.

10. Hereby they destroy all human laws, that must receive their strength from God's laws, or have none; and so they absolve all subjects in the world from conscientious obligations to obedience. If God have no proper governing laws but physical motions, then we are no further obliged to obey men, by any law of God, than we are effectually moved to it, and than we do obey them. And if so, then we can owe no more obedience to parents, masters, or princes, than they force us to! If they can make us obey them well and good: if not, we break no law of God by disobedience.

These and many such like are the consequents of that

horrid doctrine that denieth God to be the Sovereign Ruler of the world. In a word, it dasheth out at once all government, laws, justice, obedience, good works, and all morality, dissolving the whole frame of the universal monarchy of the world, and denying God to be our God, and man to be man and his subject.

But if you yield that God is the Governor of the world, it is then most evident that there is a life to come. For if he govern us, it is by laws and judgment. And if by laws, which are they? There is nothing known among rational men, by the name of a law of God, which containeth not promises and threatenings of rewards and punishments hereafter. He hath no laws for the governing of this world, that contain no motives but from temporal things. And I shewed you before, that he need not, he cannot govern the world by falsehood and deceit. And we see here by experience, that there is no such execution in this life of the laws of God, as are sufficient to the ends of government. The wicked prosper, and destroy the just: the best do most deny their flesh, and are oppressed by others. You see this in yourselves, and make it an argument for your infidelity. But stay a little till the assizes come. It follows not that there is no government or justice, because the thief or murderer is not hanged before the assizes, or as soon as he hath done the fact. Eternity is long enough for their punishment. If God then be the Governor of the world, as most certainly he is, then is there a reward and punishment hereafter; and God's day will come, when man's is past.

Query 14. My next question is, 'Whether you think that God should be loved and obeyed or not?' If not, then certainly none should be loved or obeyed. For none deserves it, if he deserve it not, from whom we are, and have all our benefits. But if he be, then I further question you,

'Whether it be likely or possible, that any man, or at least all the best people in the world, be losers by God, and their love and obedience to him?' And whether it be credible, that goodness and obedience to the Lord, should be the constant, certain way to men's undoing, loss, or misery? I think you will say, if you believe that there is a God, that this cannot be. For certainly he that sets us at work, will own us in it, and save us harmless. An honest man will take it for a disgrace to him, that his service should be the

shame and misery of his servants, and he should make them no satisfaction. If God be not able to bear us out, he is not God: and his wisdom and goodness assure us that he will do it. So that there is no possibility that goodness should be man's loss, and any should finally be losers by God. On this assurance I am encouraged to lay out all my time and labour, and dare boldly venture all that I have, in the work of God: for I am sure I cannot lose by him.

But be thou judge thyself whether his service would not make us losers, if there were no life but this, (though I confess the loss would be small and short.) Who are so hated, and persecuted as they that serve God best? How many thousands of them have been fain to give up their bodies to tormentors, and their lives to the devouring flames? The very work of God consisteth in flesh-displeasing things; to deny ourselves and condemn this world, and live soberly, and righteously, and godly in the world, and to be for this the scorn of men is the lot of the obedient.

If you say, This is not the lot of any but those that are over-righteous, I answer, 1. We cannot be over-obedient to God. 2. You contradict the experience of all ages. Even the form of godliness is hated by the profane; and temperance by the drunkard; and he shall be their scorn that runs not with them to excesses of riot. Seneca tells us that it was so even at Rome among the heathens, that he was their derision that would not be as bad as the rest. If therefore in this life only we had hope, we were of all men most miserable; 1 Cor. xv. 19. Not but that even here we have the far better life than wicked men: but that is because it savoureth of the life to come, to which it hath relation. Otherwise we should lose our credit, ease, pleasure, profit in the world, and have nothing for it. Faithfully labour for God, O my soul, and never fear being a loser by his work.

Query 15. I further ask, 'Whether you would be alone of this brutish opinion, or would you have all others of your mind?' If you would not have others believe as you do, it seems you think not well of your own opinion, but take it to be naught for men to hold. And why should not all men hold it if it were true? But if you would have all of that mind, it were time for you to look about you. Certainly the law-makers would make other laws than now they do, and men would lead other kind of lives. And what security you

would have of your goods, or houses, or lives a week, from the malice or covetousness of others, I cannot imagine. You would not dare to travel by the way, or look out among men : you could not trust your servants, nor your wives or husbands, because there would be nothing but temporal punishment to restrain them, which cunning might escape. I do not think but you would rather have servants, or neighbours, or husband, or wife, that believe a life to come, than those that do not, if you had tried others but a little while, and seen how little they were to be trusted, and consequently how bad your opinion is.

Query 16. And I would know, ‘ Whether you pretend to any honesty and conscience or not? If not, you will give us leave to judge of you, and trust you accordingly. If you do, then upon what ground is it possible for you to be honest? If you believe no life to come, you must take your pleasure here on earth for your chiefest happiness : and you cannot believe any proper government of the world by the laws, rewards, and punishments, sufficient to restrain men from their sin. Virtue can be no more virtue, if God no more regard it ; and sin is no sin, if against no law. Indeed while you live among believers, where vice is in disgrace, you may for your credit seem to be virtuous : but your profession alloweth us to judge that you avoid no evil that you dare commit, if it do but suit with your fleshly interest. He that believeth no life to come, and tells me so, doth bid me, in effect, to suppose him resolved for all wickedness imaginable, so far as he dare, and hath temptations and opportunity. Are you of this brutish judgment? I shall expect from you then no better than a brutish life ; and trust you less than I would do a brute, because you have more interest and temptation to do evil, and more cunning to perform it. Are you brutists in opinion? Then you are already habitually perfidious, cruel, covetous, malicious, murderers, whoremongers, thieves, liars, and worse, if any thing be worse! For honest you cannot for shame expect that any should esteem you. I will not believe a word you say, further than some interest of your own is concerned in the truth of it.

Query 17. ‘ If it be not the very light and law of nature that teacheth and obligeth a man to believe a life to come, how comes it to pass, that all the world, except a few sa-

vages and cannibals, and here and there an apostate among us, do universally profess to believe it?' The Jews, the Turks, the heathens of most nations, besides the Christians, do all make it an article of their belief. We differ indeed about the way, (and yet all are agreed that godliness and honesty, fearing God and doing righteousness, are necessary;) but that there is another life, we are in almost all the world agreed. And will you go against the light of human nature itself? Or with what face can you expect that here and there such a wretch as you should be thought wiser than all the world, till you give us better evidence of your wisdom? And how justly do they perish that will follow you?

Query 18. 'Are not those that believe the life to come, of holier lives (for the generality) than those that do not?' And whether is it like that God should reveal his mind to them, or unto wicked wretches? and is it more likely that he should forsake all the holy persons of all ages, and give them up to deceit in the greatest matters, who most diligently study and pray for knowledge, rather than forsake those sensual wretches that wilfully forsake him?

Query 19. 'Is there not in thy own conscience, at least sometimes, some fears yet left of a life to come?' I believe there is; and when thou hast done thy worst, thou wilt hardly perfectly overcome them. Doth not conscience say, 'O but what if there should be a hell for the ungodly? Where am I then?' Hearken then to thy conscience.

Query 20. 'Dost thou believe that spirits in borrowed shapes have oft appeared unto men, and in voices spoken to them, to draw them to sin, or to perdition?' If thou do believe it, thou mayst easily believe that there is a hell which they are so busy to persuade us to, and a heaven of which they would deprive us. If thou believe not that there have been such apparitions, I am able to give thee undeniable testimonies. Read what I have said in my "Treatise against Infidelity" of this. Read Regimus, Bodin, Danæus, Malleus Maleficorum, &c. of Witches; and read a little book called "The Devil of Masson," where is abundant testimony of his vocal conference, for about a quarter of a year together, in the house of a godly minister in a populous city, before Papists, Protestants, and all. Many I could give you that were done here at home.

In these twenty questions I have but endeavoured to pre-

pare you to believe, by shewing you the very light of nature: but it is a lively faith in the word of God that effectually prevaieth against infidelity; and therefore next let us come to that. I will not so much lose my time as to cite particular texts of Scripture, for that which is the very work and drift of the Scripture. But because thou canst have no shift in the world for thy brutish unbelief, but by denying the Scripture to be the word of God, I refer thee to that which I have written in the books forementioned to prove it; and at this time shall add to what is there said, but these few questions.

Quest. 1. ‘ If the Scripture be not the word of God, how could it tell us of the making of the world, and such like things, which none but God alone could tell?’ I know you will say, I know not whether it tells us true or not; or whether the world were not, as Aristotle thought, from eternity. But tell me this then, (to pass by the rest now;) How comes it to pass that in all the world there are no books or monuments known of any longer standing than the time that Scripture assigneth to the creation? It is not six thousand years since the creation. If the world had lasted thousands and millions of years before, is it possible that all its antiquities should be lost, and not one to be seen, nor mentioned by any man in all the world? (For the fabulous tales of some in China, without all proof, are not worth the mentioning.) Certainly some book would have been saved, or some cities, or lasting piles, or stony monuments preserved, or some sign or tradition kept alive, of some of all those many thousand years.

If you say, that writing or printing were not then known, you come to that which confounds you more. How is it possible that in so many hundred thousand years, the world grew to no more experience, and arts and sciences were ripened no more, when now they have ripened in a shorter time? How is it that printing and writing were not found out? and that all sciences and arts are of so late invention, and as it were, but in their youth? Certainly knowledge is the daughter of experience, and experience the daughter of time; and therefore if the world had been from eternity, it must needs have been many a hundred thousand years ago, at a far higher state of knowledge than is yet attained in the world. For every age receiveth the experiences and writings

of the former, and hath opportunity still to make improvement of them. At least the world could not have been ignorant so long of printing, writing, and a hundred things that are certainly of late invention. It is therefore an incredible thing that an eternal world should lose all the memorials and monuments of its antiquity, before the Scripture-time of the creation. And therefore doubtless it began but then.

Quest. 2. ‘ And if God were not the Author of the Scripture, how come so many clear and notable prophecies of it to be fulfilled?’ How punctually doth David, and Isaiah (liii.) describe the sufferings of Christ, and Daniel foretel the very year! and so of many others.

Quest. 3. ‘ And how comes it all to contain but one entire frame conspiring to reveal the same doctrine of grace and life;’ (at first more darkly, and in types and promises, and afterwards more clearly in performance,) when the writers lived at hundreds and thousands of years distance from each other?

Quest. 4. And if thou hadst not a blinded, prejudiced mind, thou wouldst perceive an unimitable majesty and spirituality in the Scripture, and wouldst savour the Spirit of God in it as its author, and wouldst know by the image and superscription, that it is the word of God. It beareth inimitably the image of his power, and wisdom, and goodness; so that the blessed Author may to a faithful soul be known by the work.

Quest. 5. If the Scripture came not from the Spirit, it could not give or cause the Spirit; if it bore not God’s image itself, how could it print his image upon the souls of so many thousands as it doth? The image of God is first engraven on the seal of his holy doctrine, and thereby imprinted on the heart. There is no part of that holy change on man, but what that holy doctrine wrought. If therefore the change be of God, the doctrine that wrought it is of God; for both of them are the same image, answering each other, as that on the seal, and on the wax. But it is most certain that the holy change on the soul is of God. The nature of it sheweth this: for it consisteth in the destruction of our sin, and the denial of ourselves, and the raising the heart above this world, and the total devoting of ourselves, and all that we have to God, and conforming ourselves to his

will, and resting in it, and seeking and serving him with all our power, against all temptations, and living in the fervent love of God and of our brethren, and desires after everlasting life; and a taking Christ for our Lord and Saviour, to reconcile us to God, and do all this in us by his Spirit. And surely such a work as this must needs be of God. If it be good, it must needs be originally from him that is most good: this is undeniable. (And he that will say, this is evil, is so much of the devil's nature and mind, that it is no wonder if he follow him, and be brutified.) And you cannot say, that the work is good, and the doctrine bad; for the work is nothing but the impress of the doctrine. And God doth not use to appoint or use a frame of falsehoods and deceits, as his ordinary means to renew men's souls, and work them to his will.

Perhaps you will say, that you see no such change made by the word, nor any such spirit given by it unto men, but only the effects of their own imaginations. But, 1. The question is, Whether they are true or false imaginations? God's truth causeth that impress on the mind of man, which you call his imaginations: for where should truth be received, but in the mind? and how should it work but by cogitation? They are cogitations above and contrary to those of flesh and blood, that are wrought by this holy doctrine. It is nevertheless of the Spirit, because it moveth man by consideration.

2. And if you see not a work on the hearts of the regenerate appearing in their lives, which raiseth them to a far better state than others, it can be no better than strangeness or malice that can so far blind you.

3. But if it be so with you, give leave yet to the persons that know this holy change in themselves, to believe the more confidently the word that wrought it. We know that we are renewed and passed from our former spiritual death to life: and therefore that it was the truth of God that did the work of God upon us. Nothing but truth can sanctify: but the word doth sanctify; therefore the word is truth.

Indeed the holy church of Christ throughout all ages of the world, hath been his living image, and so a living witness of his word, as shewing by their lives the transcript of it in their hearts. It is easy for any that know them, ex-

cept the maliciously blind, to perceive that the true servants of Christ are a more purified, refined, honest, conscionable, holy, heavenly people than the rest of the world. For my part, I am fully convinced of it; I see it; there is no comparison; for all their imperfections, which they and I lament, I am fully satisfied that there is much more of God on them than on others. And therefore there is much more of God in the doctrine that renewed them than in any other. The church is the living Scripture, the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. iii. 15.); the law is written in their hearts (Heb. viii. 10.) better than it was in the tables of stone; 2 Cor. iii. 3. And by their holy love and works, the world may know that Jesus Christ was sent of the Father, and may be brought to believe on him, by their unity; John xvii. 21—23. Matt. v. 16. God would not concur so apparently and powerfully with a false doctrine, to make so great a change in man; nor so far own it, as to use it for the doing of the most excellent work in all this world, even the gathering him such a church, and sanctifying to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works; Tit. ii. 14.

If you say that some of the heathens have been as good: I answer, 1. The goodness found in them, is but temperance, fidelity, and such like; and not a holy spirituality, or heavenliness, no, nor a thorough conscientiousness in what they knew.

2. That good was rare in comparison of that which the Gospel worketh, as well as small.

3. That good which they had, was wrought only by some scraps or parcels of the same holy truth that is contained in the Scriptures. And therefore even so much truth among the heathens as profited them to any reformation, was the word of God, and owned by him.

Quest. 6. Do you believe that Jesus Christ did rise again from the dead, or not? and that he and his disciples did work those many uncontrolled miracles, or not? If you do believe it, then what need you further testimony to prove the doctrine to be of God? or to prove that there is a life to come? Shall the Captain of our salvation himself rise from the dead, and conquer death, and ascend up into heaven, to shew us that there is a life to come, and yet will you not believe it? Or would God lend to any man his power to confirm a false doctrine to the world? If so, then 1. It

would be God himself that should mislead us. For it is he that worketh the miracles, or granteth special power to the instrument to do it. 2. Man should be unavoidably misled. For if a man rise from the dead, and raise others, and give to thousands the gift of languages, healing, and the like, and all this have no greater contrary evidence from God of some contradiction or controlment, I am unavoidably deceived; and neither my greatest innocency or diligence, or any other help from men, could possibly relieve me. And he that can believe that the infinitely Powerful, Wise, and Good, is either necessitated or disposed to deceive the world, and rule them by deceit and falsehood, and to lend his power to confirm a doctrine that he hateth, and is against himself, this man indeed believeth not that there is any God. 3. Even the brustists themselves, and all the infidels with whom we talk, will confess that if they should see Christ rise, or see such miracles, they would believe: and therefore they do confess that they are cogent evidence to those that know of them.

Object. 'Did not the sorcerers in Egypt work miracles?'

Ans. 1. Wonders they did, but not miracles. 2. They were controlled, and shamed, and disowned by God by Moses' contradictory, conquering miracles.

Object. 'But some might have died between the magicians' wonders, and Moses' controlment, and so have been unavoidably lost.' *Ans.* 1. The time was near, and that not likely of those that knew of them. 2. At the first wonder of the magicians, Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods, (Exod. vii. 22.) and therefore the conquest obliged them to suspend belief of the other. 3. The miracles of Moses were not to reveal a new doctrine of salvation that could not otherwise be known; but partly to convince Pharaoh that the Lord was God, and partly to cause him to let go the Israelites. The people's salvation lay not on the latter; and the former they had abundant means to know by the works and light of nature itself. And the magicians' wonders were not to reveal a new false doctrine any further than to contend against Moses' miracles; and if they had, yet being against the doctrine of the whole creation, that revealeth the Creator, no man could be excusable for believing them, because God hath given so full a testimony before against them, so that this objection is plainly but an impertinent cavil.

But I doubt not but you will say, that you are not sure

that Christ rose again, and that ever, such miracles were done. I ask therefore,

Quest. 7. Whether it be possible, that so many and so wise and godly men (as their writings prove them) should give up their lives and all that they had and could have hoped for in this world, to persuade the world that they saw Christ risen, if it were false; and to draw them to believe a falsehood that tended to the worldly ruin of them all?

Quest. 1. And is it possible that if they had been so bad and mad, that so many thousands would have believed them when their own frequent miracles, language, &c. were the witness of their fidelity to which they openly appealed? and this in the very age and place where all these things might easily be confuted if untrue? If I should pretend to convince the world by language not learned, and by other miracles and gifts which I never had, would countries, or any sober persons believe me? or should I not be the common scorn? Would the churches of the world have been planted by pretended miracles that never were? Would they all have given up estates and lives upon an evident lie? It was easy for them all to see and hear whether these things were done or not. And therefore he that seeth those churches which were the proper effects of miracles, may know the cause; a real effect had a real cause.

Quest. 9. Was it possible that so many hundred or thousand persons, dispersed about the world on a sudden, could without coming near each other, agree both upon one and the same false doctrine throughout, and on the same practices to deceive the world?

Quest. 10. Is it possible that among so many thousands, that torments, or death, or common ingenuity, would not have forced some to have repented, and opened the deceits of all the rest?

Quest. 11. 'Is it possible that so many heretics that did fall from them and set against the true apostles, would none of them have disclosed the deceit, if really the miracles had not been done?'

Quest. 12. Is it possible that none of the Jews, their bitter enemies, nor any of the learned Romans of that age, would have discovered the fraud, and by writing confuted matters of fact, being public, and if false, so easily confuted?'

Where are the books that ever any one of them wrote to dis-

prove any of these miracles? If you say the Christians burnt them; give us the least proof of it if you can. When did any Jew complain of such a thing? Nay, how could the dispersed, persecuted Christians destroy the writings of their reigning enemies? The writings of Jews and Romans then written remain to this day, and had fuller human advantages of preservation than any that are against them. No Jews or Romans complained, or to this day complain of such a thing, nor tell us of any such writings of theirs, that ever were in the world.

Quest. 13. Nay, the Jews confessed the miracles themselves, and had no shift left for their unbelief, but by blaspheming the Holy Ghost, and saying that they were done by the power of the devil.

Quest. 14. All the dispersed churches and Christians of the world, have universally concurred in delivering us down these matters of fact, and the writings that contain them; and this as a thing that they grounded all their hope of salvation on, and for which they contemned this present world. And the enemies that gainsaid their doctrine, did not gainsay these matters of fact. Could this be feigned?

Quest. 15. Have I not fully manifested in my book against Infidelity (to which I must again dismiss you), that there is a full and infallible evidence, that this Scripture was written by the apostles and evangelists, and these miracles done, as there is that any of the statutes of this land are the current statutes of those parliaments that are said to make them? And your lands and lives are held by the credit of these statutes.

A word or two to the objections of a masked infidel of this country. Clem. Writer.

Saith he, 'Men be not commanded to believe these statutes on pain of damnation. Therefore the case is not like.'

Answ. But men are commanded to obey them upon pain of death; and believing is prerequisite to obeying; therefore the case is like. Death is the utmost penalty that man can inflict; or if there be greater, it all runs on the same foundation. And sure that evidence that proves men culpable for breaking men's laws must prove him culpable for breaking God's. You have no other eyes to read the laws of God, than those by which you read man's laws. And doth it follow that God must not condemn you for breaking

his laws, when men do but hang you for breaking theirs ? Sure God's laws and man's may be printed in the same character, and read with the same eyes, and both have the same natural means of delivery, and yet the sin and punishment differ as the authority doth.

Object. ' But (saith he) can the miracles confirm the Scripture, when it is the Scripture that reports the miracles ?'

Ans. 1. Cannot a statute tell you what parliament made it, and what matters of fact were the occasion, and also what shall be your duty upon pain of death ? so that the makers and facts shall give force unto the law, and yet the law reveal the maker and facts ? Do not church constitutions do the same ? The Scripture hath two parts : the history and the doctrine. May not the history confirm the doctrine, and that doctrine oblige us to our duty ?

2. But you suppose that the miracles and facts can only be known by a divine belief of the history. But this is false. The common evidence that all statutes, histories, and actions in the world have to make them certain to posterity (as Cicero's or Virgil's writings, or Cæsar's reign, &c.), the same have the books and miracles of Scripture to us. And by these we can know them 'de facto' to be such, before we believe them by a divine faith. And as the Scripture is a history that hath the same evidence as the best of histories have, so it may concur with abundance of other evidence (which I have recited in my "Determination against Infidelity," and in my "Key for Catholics,") to prove the facts ; and then those facts will fully prove the truth of all the doctrines which they attest, and consequently, we shall add to our human faith and knowledge, a divine faith concerning the history itself.

Object. 3. ' But (saith this writer) if God had meant that the Scripture should be a law to all, he would not have writ it in a language which they understand not.'

Ans. 1. Any thing will serve to make an infidel, when the mind is corrupted and deplorate. Were they no laws which the Romans wrote in Latin, for the government of all the nations in the Roman world ? It was enough that the rulers of the provinces caused them to be so far understood by the people as was necessary to a righteous government. I mean those laws that were added to the proper laws of that people.

2. Was there any one language then that all the world

understood? And was it not enough that God appointed the ministerial office purposely to preserve and publish this Gospel to the world from generation to generation? And is not translating (whether by voice or writing) a part of that preaching or explication? Did not the ministers of Christ preach the same doctrine to the world then, in the several languages of the nations where they came? And were not the Scriptures presently translated according to the use of the churches? Upon how silly a pretence then would your imperial majesty impose it on the God of heaven, to write his word in as many languages as are in the world, if he would be believed?

I will trouble you with no more such wretched cavils. These three are the main strength of three pamphlets written against the holy Scriptures and me, by this apostate. Their sum is, 'Man is man; therefore we are not sure that Scripture is true, or that God is God.' I mean, 'Man cannot understand the minds of others but by signs. All signs whether words or deeds, have some ambiguity, or liableness to misunderstanding; therefore nothing can be known concerning God or man by signs.' These are not his words; but the true scope and life of all the writings of him and all the infidel seekers.

If you chide me for troubling the Christian reader here with so much against infidels and brutists, I answer, 1. I did it because that sort increase, and threaten the land. 2. Because the strengthening of the belief of the best Christians is the removing the cause of all their weakness and complaints. 3. And principally, because when once the certain truth of another life is manifested, he must be a bedlam or worse that will not be godly, or that will open his mouth any more against a holy life. What! is it possible for a sober man to believe that he is so near an everlasting joy or misery, and yet to neglect it, and oppose them that make it their chiefest care and labour to prepare for it? The brutist hath drowned his reason; and the careless professor laid it to sleep; the malicious, ungodly professor of Christianity fights against it, and only the serious, holy Christian doth use it for his everlasting good.

CHAPTER IV.

Holiness is best for all Societies.

READER, if thou be but a man that hast the free use of thy reason, I have already removed the greatest impediment out of thy way, and said enough by confuting thy infidelity, to prove that godliness is the better part. Thou hast nothing left now to say against it, but what fighteth against reason in the open light, and therefore I shall find an easier task with thy understanding in all that follows, though with thy corrupted will and concupiscence the conflict yet may be as strong.

Well! if yet thou art not resolved, that diligent, serious godliness is that good part that all should choose, and better than all thy worldly pleasures, I shall now discover it to thee in these particulars.

I. I shall shew you that godliness is best for all societies.

II. That it is best for every person. And 1. It is the safest way. 2. It is the most honest way. 3. That it is the most gainful way. 4. That it is the most honourable way. And 5. That it is the most pleasant and delightful way. Yea, that there is no other true safety, honesty, profit, honour, or delight but what is to be found in this way. I lay not only all the reputation of my understanding, but all the hopes and happiness of my soul upon the proof of this point. If I prove it not, I will confess myself a fool and undone for ever. But if I prove it, let the ungodly make this sad confession, and choose the better part while they may have it.

I. And first, That Godliness is the best for all societies (that are just) I prove thus :

1. Godliness doth unite or centre all societies in the only Head and Centre of unity ; that is, the blessed God himself. A commonwealth will never have peace in a state of rebellion against their sovereign (unless he be one that they can overcome). Nor soldiers in a state of mutiny against their general. Nor scholars in shutting out their master. God is the only Sovereign of the whole world. The godly all unite in him. Ungodliness is rebellion against him. The rebels are always in his power. There is no peace nor safety therefore, nor any unity, but an agreement in rebellion for a while

to any that are not by holiness united in him, and loyal subjects to him. "There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked;" Isa. xlviii. 22.

Object. 'But do we not see that the main divisions of the world are about religion? *Ans.* 1. It is true; but not by the truly religious. The great quarrel of the world is against religion in the life and practice of it. 2. It is unholy men that cannot abide to be accounted unholy, that are the chief dividers. 3. Among the truly godly, there is no division in the main, but only differences about the smaller branches of religion, which are numerous, and less discernible, and less necessary than the common truths. They are all agreed of truth enough to bring them to heaven; and therefore enough to unite them in dear affection upon earth. Nay, there is not one of them that hath not a special love to all that he discerneth to be the servants of the Lord. If any be without this, he is ungodly. And we are not to answer for the miscarriages of every infidel or ungodly man, that will put on the name of Christianity and godliness. If there should be fallings out among the godly, they cannot rest till they are healed and set in joint again. But you must not then be so unjust as to conclude, that we can have no unity, till we are in all things of a mind. May not men of various complexions be of one society? Are not the multitudes of veins and arteries in your bodies, united in the trunks and roots? Is not the tree one, that hath many branches?

Object. 'But God whom you will needs unite in, is far from us, and his mind unknown, and so is not the mind of princes; and therefore we cannot unite in God.'

Ans. In things necessary to our future happiness and present unity in special love, the mind of God is more plainly and fully opened to us, than the mind of any prince unto his subjects. What precepts can be plainer, than to love God above all, and our neighbour as ourselves, and first to seek the kingdom of God, and to repent and believe in Christ? How plain are the articles of our faith and the ten commandments! Divisions have been about niceties; I hope God will call back his churches to the ancient simplicity and practical Godliness, and then the Christian world will be agreed, except the wicked.

2. Godliness propoundeth and prosecuteth the most uniting, excellent, powerful end, for all that duty that should

advance societies ; and therefore must needs be best for all societies. God and heaven is the common end of all the godly. They are agreed every man of them in one end ; and so are not others. Their end hath that power in its attractive excellency, by which it can do the greatest things that are to be done with the will of man. The ends of the ungodly are small and childish toys. Our end also is as the sun, sufficient for all ; and therefore not a matter of contention. All may have God as well as one, without diminishing the happiness of any.

3. Godliness takes away the ball of the world's contention, that sets men every where together by the ears. It teacheth men to slight the honour and vainglory that the gallants will fight and die for, and to condemn that wealth that towns, and countries, and kingdoms are divided and destroyed by. It teacheth men to slight that money, the love of which is the "root of all evil ;" 1 Tim. vi. 10. It sheweth men a better treasure, and not only verbally, but effectually teacheth them to trample upon that which the tumultuous world doth so much scramble for, and seek by such rapine, oppression, deceit, and blood. If all the ambitious climbers and state-troublers were truly godly, they would quietly seek for higher honours. If all the covetous noblemen, soldiers, landlords, and rich men were truly godly, they would never set both city and country into combustions, and poor oppressed families into complaints, for the love of money. If thieves turned godly you might travel safely, and spare your locks and keep your purses. If tradesmen were all truly godly, deceit would not so break their peace. What is there for societies to strive about, when the bone of contention is taken away, and godliness hath cast down the idol of the world, that did disturb them ?

4. Godliness takes down the great disturbing and dividing principle in man's soul ; and that is, selfishness. And it both commandeth and worketh self-denial. Every ungodly man hath a private end, and a private spirit, and interest, that is dearer to him than any other. So many ungodly men as there are, so many ends and interests. And how then can there be a possibility of unity ? The wisest lawgivers could never yet contrive an effectual course for the uniting of all these. If selfishness were down, I scarce know what should trouble the peace of kingdoms, cities, families, or any other

societies. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;" or, "Thou shalt not covet," is the sum and conclusion of all the law of God, concerning our carriage one to another. And it is godliness and nothing else that perfectly teacheth and truly (though imperfectly here) effecteth this self-denial. But of this elsewhere.

5. Godliness hath the most perfect righteous laws; and therefore is best for all societies. If God can make better laws than man, then this is past all question. His laws require nothing but what is for men's good. They prescribe nothing that is dishonest or unjust. They promise the greatest rewards to the obedient. They drive on the backward by the threatening of the greatest punishments. Their authority is highest and most unquestionable. They all proceed from one absolute sovereign, and are the same to all the people of the world. They change not, but are to endure to the world's end. Whereas all the laws of men are limited to their own dominions, and endure but while their power can enforce them. They are subject to error and injustice; and are not the same in one country as in another; or in one age as in the former; and their rewards and punishments are but temporal; and therefore, though under the laws of God, they are necessary for the government of commonwealths, yet without God's laws they would be utterly insufficient.

6. The way of holiness is contrary to all evil whatsoever, and therefore hath nothing to disturb a commonwealth. It is true, we cannot say so of the persons, because they are but imperfectly sanctified. Were they in all things such as their Lord, and rule, and religion do require, they would have nothing that might be injurious to any. But surely as a sick man or a lame, is better than a dead corpse; and as a man of mean understanding is better than an idiot, and a mean scholar better than the illiterate; so a man imperfectly sanctified, is better in a commonwealth, than the ungodly. You blame not the laws of this land, because that thieves and murderers break them. The laws are good, if they oblige men to nothing but what is good, though bad men break them. The rules of the Christian religion are most perfect, and direct or command men nothing that is evil. There may be faults in us, but there is none in the holy laws which we desire and endeavour to obey. Religion therefore is the way

to the perfecting and securing of all societies, and the want of it subverteth them.

7. Holiness doth not only tell men of a right way, and shew them their duty, but also effectually disposeth their very minds to the performance of it, and causeth them to walk therein. The nature of it is, to be the very right disposition of the heart, and right ordering of the life. The truly gracious soul is habitually an enemy to all known sin, and addicted to obey in all known duties. And surely persons thus habituated are more like to live according to their dispositions, than others to live well that hate the good in their hearts which they should practise. Men's laws can command good, but cannot give men good hearts to practise it, as God doth by his servants. If you cannot tell whether wicked men that love sin, or godly men that hate it, are better members of a commonwealth, you know not what societies are for.

8. Holiness destroyeth the root of iniquity, and teacheth men to hate even secret sins, which are in the heart, or which none can see but God alone. The laws of men restrain the subjects but from open injuries; but holiness restraineth men from doing the most secret wrong to others, or once thinking, speaking, or contriving any evil against them. It reacheth the conscience; it cleanseth the heart, from whence all evil doth proceed; 2 Sam. xii. 12. Deut. xxvii. 24. Psal. xc. 8. Eccles. xii. 14. A man fearing God, as such, dare not deceive or wrong another, though he were sure that it would never be known on earth. For he knoweth that the Lord is the avenger of such things; 1 Thess. iv. 6.

9. Holiness cementeth the members of all societies with the strongest cement of endeared love. It bindeth them together in the bond of charity. He is not godly that loveth not all men, even his enemies, with that common love that is due to humanity, and that loveth not all that fear the Lord with a special love; Psal. xv. 4. John xiii. 34, 35. xv. 12. 17. 1 John iii. 14. 23. iv. 7. 11, 12. 20. Luke vi. 27.

10. Holiness maketh princes and rulers a double blessing to their people. It maketh them the more divine, and bear the more excellent image of God. How precious is the name of a David, a Hezekiah, a Josiah, a Constantine, a Theodosius, (though they had all their falls,) in comparison of the

name of a Saul, a Jeroboam, an Ahab, a Nero, a Julian ! O how sweet is the name of a godly king in the subjects' mouths ! Even those that are enemies to godliness as in themselves (because they cannot endure to be curbed and troubled with it), do yet use to admire and honour it in their kings and governors. Authority and holiness conjunct are two such rays of the heavenly Majesty and Goodness as place man in the state of highest excellency on earth, and make him so much to resemble his Creator, as hath given such the highest place in the esteem and honour of the world, of any mortals. And it is not easy for a people to value such holy and pious princes and governors too highly, or to be sufficiently thankful for them unto God.

(1.) Holiness effectually teacheth governors to rule for God: To set him highest, and make it their work to seek his glory, and to avoid all selfish, contradictory interests ; and to own nothing that stands at enmity with his honour ; but to judge that they have most happily attained the ends of their government and lives, if they have promoted the Gospel and kingdom of Christ, and the work of holiness in the world.

(2.) Holiness will cause rulers to prefer God's laws before their own ; and to be examples to the subjects of obedience to God ; and to desire that all men should stand in far greater awe of God than of them. It will make them careful to form all their laws and government to the pleasing of God, and promoting men's obedience to his laws ; and to take heed that there be nothing in them injurious to Christ, or contrary to his will. It will teach them with David to inquire of God, and make him their counsellor. And with Josiah, to "search the book of the law," and humble themselves when they have violated it. And with Joshua, "not to suffer it to depart out of their mouths, but to meditate in it day and night, that they may observe to do according to all that is written therein." And then God hath promised to make "their way prosperous, and to give them good success ;" Josh. i. 8.

(3.) Holiness will cause the rulers of the world to love those that are holy, and to promote the communion of saints. and to be nursing fathers to the church, even that part of the holy catholic church, which they are intrusted with ; and to protect them from the violence of men. It will keep them

from the sins of Jeroboam, that corrupted God's worship, and put forth his hand against the prophet that spoke against it. Whereby God will be engaged to be their protector in peace and war. When princes and people that fall out with holiness and take part with the flesh, and set themselves against the servants, the worship, and the ways of Christ, do put themselves from under his protection, and put themselves under the battering and piercing strokes of his displeasure. And woe to him that striveth with his Maker, and that kicks against the pricks of his severity; Isa. xlv. 9. Acts ix. 5. xxvi. 14. The fatal ruin of the kingdoms of the world, or at least the final ruin of the persons, is from their enmity and rebellion against the Lord, and because they will not be his kingdoms, but hate and quarrel with his ways, and persecute his servants. And godliness preserveth princes and magistrates from this sin and ruin.

(4.) Holiness will cause the rulers to hate sin in themselves and others, and to remove the abominable thing from before the eyes of God's jealousy, and to "drive away the froward; and not to know the wicked and the proud, and to cut off the slanderer, and the wicked doers, and to set no wicked thing before their eyes;" Psal. ci. "In their eyes a vile person will be contemned, but they will honour them that fear the Lord." By this means their kingdoms may be holy, and God will delight in them, and dwell among them, and it shall be said of them, as Jer. xxxi. 23. "The Lord bless thee, O habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness." And when Israel is "holiness to the Lord, all that devour him shall offend, evil shall come upon them, saith the Lord;" chap. ii. 3. The holy examples, and holy government of godly kings and magistrates, will draw the hearts of the people to holiness, and cause it to flourish in the land. Whereas the wicked examples and government of the ungodly tendeth to make all about them wicked. For as Solomon saith, Prov. xxix. 12. "If a ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked." And then they are fuel for the wrath of God, both as offenders, and as enemies. For they will be still rebelling and opposing him: and carnal interests and enmity will pervert them to use the reprovers as Asa, and Amaziah, and Jeroboam, and Jezebel, and Joash did; and to think with Saul that Doeg was the best subject that would kill the priests at his command, and those the worst that would not

betray them or destroy them; and to say to false accusers, as he did to the Ziphites, (1 Sam. xxiii. 21.) “Blessed be ye of the Lord, for ye have compassion on me.” And saith the Lord, (Isa. xxvii. 4.) “Who would set the briars and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together.”

(5.) Holiness will save princes and rulers from the great and dangerous temptations of their riches, and honours, and power, and pleasures, and will teach them to mortify the flesh, and live after the Spirit (Rom. viii. 1. 6. 13.), and will keep them hereby from those sins that would subject them to the consuming wrath of the impartial God, and will bring them to heaven notwithstanding all the impediments of the world, even as a camel through a needle’s eye, by the Power to which all things are possible. And doubtless that which maketh men most acceptable to God, and tendeth to the everlasting happiness of the persons, must needs be better for all societies than that which prepareth them for damnation, and keepeth them here under the indignation of the Lord. See 2 Sam. xxiii. 3. Lev. xxv. 43. 46. 53, Isa. xxxii. 1. Rom. iii. 4—6. xii. 8.

II. And as holiness thus maketh the most excellent princes and happy governors, so it maketh the most loyal and obedient subjects, and is the most powerful preserver of peace in all societies.

If any shall say, that the people that are accounted holy have caused as great contentions and rebellions in the world as any other, witness the wars in France, Savoy, Bohemia, Scotland, England, &c. I shall first prove undeniably from the nature of the thing, that true godliness must needs make the best subjects, and tend to the happiness of commonwealths, and then I shall more nearly answer the objection.

1. Holiness effectually teacheth subjects to know themselves; to know their weakness, and meanness, and unworthiness, and to know their places and their proper work. It kills that pride that makes men think that none are so fit to rule as they; and it makes them so humble as to think themselves unworthy of protection in the meanest station. And also it so takes them up with a higher ambition, and sets their hearts on the greater things, that they are dead to the ambition of the world, and can easily leave these things to

others. Their kingdom is not of this world. They are taught to expect affliction and persecution, and not aspire after crowns. No man can deny that this is the lesson set them by their Lord, and the covenant which they make with him when they become his servants. Whereas the ungodly having their portion in this life, and relishing and minding most the things of the world, will snatch, and scramble, and turn every stone, and do any thing within their reach for worldly honours.

2. Holiness teacheth subjects to see God in their rulers, and honour and obey them as his officers, even with an honour and obedience participatively divine. And no men can give them a higher honour than they that thus honour them on God's account; and no men can give them so full, and firm, and constant obedience, as they that obey God in their governors. No man can give them higher titles than they that take them to be the officers of God. Carnal men obey their governors merely as men that are able to do them good or hurt. If they were sure to receive no damage by contemning them, they cared not to trample them in the dirt. Though that people sinned in desiring a king, yet when they had chosen that kind of government, and Saul was set over them, those that went with him were such "whose hearts God had touched; but the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? and they despised him and brought him no presents;" 1 Sam. x. 27.

3. Holiness causeth subjects to obey and submit for conscience sake. They do it because God himself hath commanded them to do it. They pay tribute, and give honour and obedience because it is part of their obedience to God, required of them in the fifth commandment, which is the first with promise. Outward prosperity is especially promised to them that honour their parents and superiors. And the commands and promises of God, with the bonds of conscience, do tie men faster to their duty, and restrain them more effectually from disobedience than the words of men alone can do. Conscience holdeth strongly and constantly; and it holdeth as well in secret as in public; so that if a man were sure to do a mischief and never be discovered, he would nevertheless abhor it, as being not unknown to God and conscience. A man that feareth not God and conscience, will never stick to do a mischief, if he may escape the eye and revenging hand

of man. Faux will set fire to the train to blow up king and parliament, if he see but a probability of escape. But he that feeleth the bonds of God upon him, dare not rebel.

4. Holiness destroyeth self-love which is the spring of all discontents and disobedience; and teacheth a man to own no ends or interests but what stand in due subordination to the honour of God and the common good; and in due co-ordination with the welfare of our neighbours. Whereas, the ungodly are every man of them an idol to himself. Self is the only lord and law, set up against God, and king, and country. And if God, or king, or country be served by them, it is but in subserviency to themselves, as they look to attain some wealth, or dignity, or honour by it. The self-seeking man is faithful and trusty to no man but himself. And the self-denying man hath no great temptation to be unfaithful.

5. Holiness doth partly consist of charity, and teacheth men to do as they would be done by. And how can it go ill with any societies where love prevaieth, and men are as loath to wrong as to be wronged, and to do hurt to others as to themselves?

6. Holiness brings down God's blessing on each particular subject; and maketh a people the delight of God: and brings them under the promise of his favour. "Godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come;" 1 Tim. iv. 8. What abundance of promises are there to the obedient! Isa. i. 19. Deut. iv. 30. Exod. xxiii. 22. Deut. xi. 27. xiii. 4. xxx. 2. 8. 20. Jer. vii. 23. xi. 4. 7. &c.

7. Holiness maketh men meek and patient, and teacheth subjects not to make too great a matter of any injury that is done them; nor to censure unwarrantably the actions of their superiors; nor to murmur and stir up discontents, but quietly to bear all in obedience to God, and for the common good.

8. Holiness disposeth men to unity and concord, and is as much against discord and division as healthful nature is against wounds and sickness. "Whence are wars, but from the lusts that war in your members?" James iv. 1. The servant of the Lord must not strive. The new command of special love to one another, and the strange forbearance, con-

cession, condescension, forgiving, and loving enemies themselves, required in the Gospel, must needs do much if truly practised to preserve the peace of any nation.

9. Holiness assureth us of so great a reward to those that obey their superiors in things lawful, and offers us so much better things upon our patience and submission, than ever disobedience or rebellion can attain, that hereby it must needs tend to the quiet and benefit of societies. He that is bound to "rejoice and be exceeding glad" in his "persecution, because his reward in heaven is great," hath small reason to contrive, or fight, or sin to escape the persecution together with the reward; Matt. v. 11, 12.

10. Holiness teacheth men both to continue obedient and faithful against all temptations, and also to propagate the same resolutions, and to draw all others to obedience with us. It was the excellency of Christ's example, that he would be obedient even when he was fully accused of treason, and charged as an usurper of Cæsar's right. If we should be called seditious, disobedient, and rebellious when we are most loyal, it must not move us from our loyalty at all. In all these ten particulars I have shewed, that in the nature of the thing, it is undeniable that godliness is the strength and beauty, and safety of kingdoms, and of all societies; in that it engageth the subject as well as the governors, in all that tendeth to their peace and welfare.

And now you may see by what is said, that there can be no weight in the objection which pretendeth from the case of the Waldenses, Albigenses, Bohemians, French, &c. to produce experience against what I am proving. Health may as truly be said to be the cause of sickness, as godliness to be the cause of treachery, rebellion, or disloyalty; there being nothing in all the world except God himself, so contrary to these as godliness is.

But you will ask, Whence is it that we have the aforesaid instances? I answer, sometimes not authority, but malice and cruelty driveth poor Christians to a stone wall, and if they turn again when they can fly no further, accuseth them of rebellion; as it was with the Waldenses, the Bohemians, &c. Sometimes princes and states fall out among themselves, and cannot agree about their titles, and the bonds and degrees of their power. And then whoever the people are against, they are sure from that side to hear the

most opprobrious titles, and be used accordingly if it be in their power. Sometimes the right of government is not easily or generally known ; as in the contention between the houses of York and Lancaster here. And then as one party conquereth one year, and another the next, so the people must be called traitors and rebels by each party that prevailleth, if they obeyed and served the other party against them. And if they refuse to obey and defend either of them, they will be condemned by both. Sometimes the polity of empires and commonwealths is so imperfect and obscure in the constitution, that the several parties that pretend to interest, cannot agree about their rights, nor the lawyers agree among themselves. And the people cannot be thought to be wiser than the lawyers in the affairs of their profession. If Nero and the senate of Rome had each of them commanded the Christians to aid them against the others, it would not have been easy for the wisest and holiest of the Christians then to know which part they should have adhered to and assisted. Paul thought not meet to decide any such controversy. He commanded every soul to be subject to the higher powers, and not resist ; but he tells them not whether Cæsar or the senate was the higher powers in a case of contest and division. Sometimes a traitor usurpeth the government, and Christians think when they see him settled and in possession, that, though they hate his usurpation, yet they are bound to honour and obey him as being possessed of the government. Thus Gregory the great too hastily and flatteringly owned and applauded Phocas ; and the Christian bishops ordinarily subjected themselves to the emperors that came in by blood and violence. Thus the bishops of Rome, and of other churches in Italy and the adjacent parts, submitted themselves (I think too soon) as soon as they perceived him to be conqueror, to Theodoricus ; and so they did to other conquerors. Sometimes, as the general councils of Basil, Constance, &c. determined that a council is above the pope, and declared the contrary to be a damnable heresy, and commanded the bishops and people to obey them against the pope ; so senates, and parliaments, and the majority of statesmen and lawyers may tell the people that are unacquainted with such law cases, that in this or that they are bound to obey them, upon highest penalties, and that they shall receive to themselves condemnation if they resist

them ; and so may mislead such as intend nothing but to obey the higher powers for conscience sake. And though the error and commands of councils and parliament excuse not 'a toto' an illiterate laic that understandeth not those matters, yet surely 'a tanto' it is some excuse.

And sometimes oppression maketh a man mad ; Eccles. vii. 7. And sometimes impatience prevaieth with the weak to do things unwarrantable ; and human passion blindeth reason, and sometimes temptations prevail in this as in other cases. And sometimes hypocrites, that never had any true religion, do shew their carnal disquisitions, and unmortified lusts, and passions, and pride, by their rebellion against their lawful governors ; and then religion must bear the blame of the actions of that counterfeit religion, and of those crimes which it doth most prohibit and condemn.

In a word, Be the accusation against any particular person just or unjust, nothing is more sure and clear than that he is most unjust that will charge the Christian religion as guilty of countenancing any rebellions, conspiracies, sedition, disobedience, faction or divisions. Christ went before us in his own example to pay tribute to Cæsar ; and commanded us to give to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's ; and their false accusing him and condemning him as an offender against Cæsar, did no whit move him from the duty of his state of humiliation. What can be more against all treason and perfidiousness, than that holy doctrine which commandeth us the most exact performance of every lawful promise, much more of our oaths, and duties of allegiance ? What can be more against rebellion than that holy doctrine which teacheth us a life of patience and meekness, condemning private revenge, and commanding us rather to turn the other cheek to him that smiteth us, and to give our coat to him that taketh away our cloak, and to go two miles with him that would compel us to go one ; that is, to suffer yet more, rather than revenge ourselves, or break peace, or order or raise wars, to escape such injuries. It is a crucified Christ that conquered by suffering, that is our example. And our religion is but our conformity to him in his sufferings and his holiness. He hath made it part of our duty to himself to obey kings and rulers, and all superiors, not only the good but the froward, and to take it patiently if we suffer for well-doing, and not to return so much as a reviling dishonouring

word, or murmuring, rebellious thought. It is not fighting for ourselves, but following him with the cross, and forsaking all that we have, that Christ hath made the work of his disciples, and the necessary condition of his promise of salvation; Luke xiv. 33. There is no master in all the world, that so strictly commandeth patience and forbearance, and forgiving, and love, and peace, and submission to one another as Jesus Christ doth. He sets the hearts of all his servants on another kingdom, and tells them they have greater things to mind than riches, or honours, or domination upon earth. He taketh the bone of contention from before them, and bids them leave such things as these to the men of the world, that have their portion in this life. You may as honestly say that the sun is the greatest cause of darkness, as that Christ and holiness are the cause of seditions, rebellions, treasons, or perfidiousness in the world. All the world set together hath not done so much as he hath done against them. If men threaten hanging and quartering to such offences, Christ threateneth damnation in hell-fire to them. And would you wish him to inflict a sharper punishment, or more severely to manifest his hatred of the crimes?

I tell you therefore if you should find rebellion and sedition among Christians, it is but as you may find corruption in the bodies of the living, which is contrary to life and health, and to be found much more among the dead. I am not here pleading for individual persons, but for Christianity and godliness. If any professed Christians forsake the way of patience and subjection, and turn to rebellion and disloyalty, they do so far forsake religion and godliness, and much more wrong and offend their heavenly master, than their king and governors. Plead who will for the wickedness of such men, for my part I will not. I am sure Christ will not plead for their sin which he condemneth. He may justify them from it, upon repentance; but he will never justify them for it and in it. It is not because they are godly, but for want of godliness, that any men have ever been guilty of rebellions, or resisting lawful powers: as Dr. Ward hath fully proved in his sermon on Rom. xiii. 2. Nothing more tendeth to the ruin of rulers and people, than to hearken to the devil and the enemies of holiness, that would persuade the world into a conjunction with them in the enmity against the way of godliness and the faithful servants of the Lord, upon pre-

tence that they are adversaries to the governors and government. It is a weighty truth that the foresaid doctor begins his sermon with : ' Among all the stratagems of the devil, tending to the undermining of religion, and the subversion of the souls of men, though there cannot be any more unreasonable, yet there was never any more unhappily successful than the creating and fomenting an opinion in the world, that religion is an enemy to government, and the bringing sincerity and zeal in religion into jealousy and disgrace with the civil powers. It was by this jealousy blown into the heads of the high-priests and the Sanhedrim amongst the Jews, and of Herod and Pontius Pilate, that Christ himself was accused, condemned, and executed on a tree. By this the apostles were haled before the governors of provinces ; forced from one city to fly to another. For this they endured bonds and sundry kinds of death. It was through this fancy that the Christians for three hundred years together, endured the rage of heathen emperors, being destitute, afflicted, and tormented. Our Lord Christ was traduced as an enemy to Cæsar, a man refractory to the Roman laws, and a nonconformist to the religion and law of his country.' Thus and more that author. So that it is no new thing for the most innocent, and holy, and excellent persons to suffer as enemies of the government where they lived ; nay, it hath been the common case ; nor is it strange to hear religion and holiness charged with these crimes which they are most against.

As for the malicious slanders of the Papists against the reformed churches, as if they had promoted all their reformations by rebellion, they have been confuted sufficiently by many. At this time, I shall only desire the reader that would be satisfied in this, and understand the Protestant doctrine in these points to read Bishop Bilson's " Difference between Christian Subjection, and Unchristian Rebellion." Especially p. 382, and from 494 to 522. Also " Hooker's Eccles. Polit. the last book (lately published).

And if he would know whether it be an article of the very religion of the Papists, that the pope may give away the dominions of temporal lords that deny transubstantiation, or hold such like points which he calleth heresy, or that will not exterminate all that hold them, out of their dominions, and that he may discharge their subjects and vassals from their allegiance, I only entreat him with his own eyes to read

the decrees of their approved general council at the Lateran under Pope Innocent III. and let him but believe his eyesight. And for their case and confutation, let him also read King James's Answer to Perron's Oration.

Having thus interposed an answer to their objection, that say religion hath brought forth rebellions (which I confess that religion which teacheth rebellion hath done; but the Christian religion which condemneth it, and engageth men against it as aforesaid, doth not), I now proceed to some other proofs, that godliness is the greatest security and establishment to kingdoms and all societies.

12. Godliness above all things engageth men to be true to their covenants: to keep all their oaths and promises of obedience to kings and other superiors; and to be faithful and trusty in all their duties to one another. So horrid is the sin of perjury and covenant-breaking, that God hath condemned it, not only in the holy Scriptures, but also in the law of nature. He will not bear with it in the greatest princes; how then shall perfidious subjects escape? What fair excuses had Saul for his breaking the vow and covenant with the Gibeonites? He might have said, 1. They procured it from Joshua by a mere cheat, and therefore no benefit belonged to them from their own sin and fraud. 2. That Joshua not knowing who they were, '*ignorantis non est consensus.*' 3. That God had forbid to spare any of these nations. 4. That it was not Saul that made this oath and covenant, but Joshua. 5. That Saul did it in zeal for the people of Israel. Yet for all this in David's days there was a famine in the land for this sin of Saul, which was not expiated till seven of his sons (or posterity) were hanged at the Gibeonites' request. And though David might well see that he might be censured as contriving all this himself for the extirpation of the line of Saul, yet would he not forbear the execution; 2 Chron. xxi. And when the people murmured at Joshua, and the heads of Israel, for sparing them at first, they are answered with the obligation of the invisible oath; Josh. ix.

So though Zedekiah was the king of Babylon's captive, force could not excuse his perjury and covenant-breaking, but God severely condemned and avenged it.

So that every subject that hath but bound himself in allegiance to his sovereign, is under such an obligation as to a

true believer is more dreadful to violate, than it is to suffer death.

Yea, God hath written such a law against perjury, even in nature itself, that he must needs be afraid of it that is not a flat atheist, lest his appeal to God do bring the vengeance of God upon him. And in this life the perjured ordinarily meet with that divine revenge which is the forerunner of eternal vengeance. The perjured are unfit for human society; hated by God, and never more to be trusted by man, till sound repentance make a change. Which made Augustine determine, that he that urgeth another to forswear himself, is as much worse than a murderer, as killing the soul is worse than killing the body. Seeing then that religion doubleth these sacred bonds, and casteth hell-fire into the face of the perjured and perfidious, it must needs be a singular preserver of kingdoms and all societies, which fall in pieces where these bonds are loosed; and fall into the hands of God, who is a consuming fire, especially to perjured men.

13. Moreover, it is only godliness that obeyeth with true loyalty, and carrieth on all works methodically for the common good. As he that will obey every justice of peace in all things that he commandeth, without respect to the laws or will of the sovereign power, may be sooner a traitor than truly obedient, (for every justice or lord may arm him against his prince); so he that will obey the princes of the earth, without respect to the will or interest of the eternal God, will be but a traitor to God, under pretence of obeying princes, that are but his officers and servants. But the godly begin at God in their obedience; and therefore, they proceed methodically, and obey men upon right grounds and in their proper places. It is not the vast absolute obedience to man that is the best. He that should command men causelessly to fire his country, or to destroy the innocent, or to ravish virgins or men's wives, were not to be obeyed, as Doeg obeyed Saul; but God is first to be obeyed. It is he that begins, proceeds, and ends with God, that is sure to do no wrong, nor be misled.

14. Holiness possesseth men with a public spirit, and maketh the case of others to be our own, and teacheth us to do as we would be done by; and giveth every man that hath it, a compassion to others in their distress, and an earnest

desire after their welfare, and a rejoicing in it ; when ungodly men are all for themselves ; Psal. cxxxvii. 1 Cor. xii. 25—27. xiii. Acts ii. 44. Matt. vii. 12. Mark xii. 33.

15. Godliness engageth men in doing good, as the very business of their lives, which is to be rewarded with everlasting happiness. So that besides what is forced from men by law, they are to be still in the exercise of charity, and to be “ zealous of good works ;” and to make it their study to do all the good they can. And therefore they are certainly the most profitable members in any society, that are most truly godly ; Luke x. 29, 30. &c. Deut. xv. 9. Luke vi. 38. Gal. vi. 9, 10.

16. Moreover, holiness teacheth men to forgive wrongs, and to love our enemies, and to let go our right, rather than to break peace and revenge our wrongs ; and to forbear even going to law contentiously, and where our putting up injuries merely to ourselves may suffice for the avoiding it ; Luke vi. 27—29. Matt. vi. 14, 15. 1 Cor. vi. 7. And what contention can there be when these rules are practised, except when the interest of God or others is violated, which is not in our power to remit. If you say, that these things are good if they are practised, I answer, 1. You confess then that holiness is good ; for the rule is good, whether it be practised or not. 2. I answer, that so much as any man is sanctified, he doth practise it. And therefore if any man live not according to the rule which he professeth to live by, that is, from the remnant of that sin within him, which the wicked plead for, and for want of more of that godliness which you distaste. Make him more holy, and he will do all this.

17. Holiness secureth every society, and interesteth them in the most impregnable defence ; even in the love and favour of the Lord ; and in his many sure and precious promises. He hath engaged his almightiness and fidelity for such, and tendereth them as the apple of his eye, and hath promised that he will be their defence (Zech. ii. 8. Psal. v. 11. vii. 10. lix. 9. 16, 17. lxii. 2.), whereas the ungodly are under his curse ; Psal. i. 6. xxxvii. And which of these societies is more like to be happy ?

18. Godliness is the surest way to furnish every society with all the blessings that are truly good for them. For they have the favour and promise of him that is the giver of them

all; Rom. viii. 28. Psal. xxxiv. 10. lxxxiv. 11. xxiii. "Godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come;" 1 Tim. iv. 8. vi. 6. Matt. vi. 33. But wickedness is the certain way to ruin. "Even one sinner destroyeth much good;" Eccles. ix. 18. And one godly man hindereth much evil, as the case of Joseph, Moses, Daniel, and many others tell you.

19. Moreover it is godliness that is the honour of all societies. Without this their wisdom is mere folly, and their riches are but the fetters of their slavery, and canker to gnaw them and testify against them, and their greatest victories may be but murders which shall damn them; and their splendour in the world is but the sign of their misery in the eyes of all foreseeing men. "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people;" Prov. xiv. 34. What glory can be equal to the glory of our interest in God, and of our being his people, and doing his work, and having his presence?

20. Lastly, How can that be worst on earth, that is so good in heaven? The perfection of holiness hereafter, with the holy love, and praises, and enjoyments of the saints, will be their glory. If you think this worst in your societies on earth, what do you but renounce it? If heaven be worst for you, come not hither. If the participation of that which is the felicity of the glorified, be not the felicity of all societies, I desire none of their felicity.

What if saints from heaven would come down and dwell among you here on earth? I beseech you as men of reason, answer me these two questions.

(1.) Whether you do not know or verily believe, that they would be more holy, and pure, and exact, and strict, and more averse to all sin, than any of those are that now you dislike as too precise?

(2.) Whether you would therefore call them Puritans, and hate them, and cast them out, or imprison them, or take them for the troublers of your countries, or rather for the honour and blessing of your countries? What you would do by them that do by those that come nearest to them among you.

CHAPTER V.

Times of Holiness are the best Times.

AND now I have been giving you all this evidence, I dare leave it to the judgment of any man that is fit to judge, whether it be the godly or ungodly that are the better magistrates, or better pastors of the churches, or better members of the commonwealth, or of any society. Judge now whether the places and times are not better that are most godly. And whether it be the godly or the ungodly that are the troublers of the world.

And yet it hath ever been the practice of ungodly men, to charge it upon them that fear the Lord, that all the troubles of the world are long of them. 'We were all quiet, (say they) before this religion and preciseness troubled us; and this is it, that since it came among us, hath set us all together by the ears.' But if these men be yet unreasonable, I desire them to consider,

1. That this hath always been the old complaint of the most wicked men, which God himself hath testified against. When Lot did but gently admonish the abominable Sodomites to forbear a villany not to be named; "I pray you brethren do not so wickedly" (Gen. xix. 7—9.), what said they to him, and how did they take it? Why, "they said, Stand back: and they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge; Now will we deal worse with thee than with them." Is not this the case between us now? How are we unpeaceable? Because we are against sin? If we would hinder men from wronging God, and from condemning their own souls, and others, then forsooth, we are their troublers, and we judge them, and we disturb their peace? Just like the Sodomites, 'These precise fellows (say they) will needs be our judges, and we must be ruled by them; before they came among us we had none of this ado.' But did not God, think you, decide the controversy aright? He first took Lot and his family away that the Sodomites might be troubled with that precise and busy fellow no more; and then he sent fire from heaven on Sodom, and consumed them all, "making them an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire;" Jude 7. Or as it is fully set forth by the

Holy Ghost, "Turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, he condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example to those that after should live ungodly. (Mark this.) And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked. (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds.) The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust to the day of judgment to be punished;" 2 Pet. ii. 6—9.

And now who is it that was troublesome, and the cause of evil? Was it Lot, or was it Sodom? Take heed lest God take the Lots that trouble you from among you, and when you are rejoicing that you are rid of them, he serve you worse than he served Sodom.

In the days of Noah, no question but that preacher of righteousness seemed to the world a singular and a self-conceited fellow. But did not God decide the controversy whether it were Noah, or they, that were the troublers of the world? Saith Peter, 2 Pet. ii. 5. "God spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly."

When Israel fell before the men of Ai, it was a doubt who it was that was the cause of that calamity; but God proved it to be Achan, who is stoned upon this sentence of Joshua; "Why hast thou troubled us? the Lord shall trouble thee this day;" Josh. vii. 25.

2. And consider, I pray you, what a quietness it is that you have, before you are troubled by the godly? It is a quietness in the highway to hell. You had the privilege of damning your souls without disturbance from these precise controllers. Hath not Christ told us, that the devil is thus like "a strong man armed, that while he keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth the spoils;" Luke xi. 21, 22. The hearts and the nations that are not conquered by Christ, are the devil's garrisons and possessions. Do you think that it is best that he possess them still in peace? Or that the preachers of Christ, that plant his ordnance against them, and batter them, till they are

forced to yield, are therefore busy, troublesome fellows? What is it for, but for your deliverance, that are satan's captives at his will? 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26.

3. And might you not on this ground also account Christ himself the troubler of the world, as much, and a thousand times more than us? For he doth more to disturb men in their sins than any of us: and he doth more for holiness than all the world besides. And in this sense he confesseth and foretels us, that he came not to send peace but division into the world, into towns, and countries, and families; Luke xii. 51—53. If we can have no peace with you, unless we will disobey our Lord, and serve the devil and the flesh, and damn our own souls, and suffer you to do the like, then keep your peace among yourselves; we will none of that peace; we have no mind to buy your friendship and good words at such a rate! If your peace will stand with our peace with God, and peace of conscience, we will gladly accept of it: if it will not, we can be without it. Your souls are like sores that may not be searched, or a broken bone that must not be set, for fear of hurting you. You are like men that must have that which would kill them; or like children, that will cry if they be but taken out of their dung, or kept from fire, or from knives. If we do but cross you in the way to hell, we trouble you, and we break the peace. Yea, and if we will not cast away our souls everlastingly for company! And is this the case? Is this the breaking of your peace? The Lord will shortly be a righteous Judge between you and us, and tell you who it was that was the troubler of the towns and countries, and of the world.

You find Ahab and Elijah at this contest. Ahab takes him for the troubler of Israel when a heavy famine was among them. Elijah saith, No; but it was Ahab and his father's house that had troubled Israel by their wickedness, 1 Kings xviii. 17, 18. And which think you was in the right, the prophet or the king?

Why sirs, what is it that godliness doth, that it should be taken for the troubler of the world, when ungodliness is taken for your peace? Is it our persuading or hindering you from sin that troubleth you? And will not the everlasting fruit of it trouble you more? Then even say, that washing you, or sweeping your houses, or curing your sores, or sickness, or persuading you not to kill yourselves, is a

troubling of you! Or is it (as the Lord hath told us it will be, Matt. v. 10, 11. John xv. 18, 19. 1 Pet. iv. 4, 5.) because we are not such as you, and will not do as you do, and be of your opinion, and forsake our Lord to keep you company? Is it not with good reason? When we know you cannot save us harmless, and will not answer for us before the Lord? We know that every man must answer for himself, and therefore we durst not trust to you, if you would promise us to bring us off: it is best for you to study better how to answer for yourselves. But if you are resolved on it, that ungodly you will be, and that you will venture on hell to escape a holy life, why should you not give us leave to pity you, and to forbear your folly, and to save ourselves? Will it do you any harm that others should be saved, or that others should be godly? Your own sanctification indeed cannot stand with your lusts and fleshly pleasures; but another man's may. It will take none of your vainglory, or wealth, or sensual delights from you, that another man is sanctified or devoted unto God. And therefore be not angry with us, if we obey the Holy Ghost, that calleth to us, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation;" Acts ii. 40.

Object. 'O but (saith the ungodly crew) it was never a good world since there was so much religion, and preaching, and preciseness, and so much ado about serving God! It was a better world, when we had but a short service read on Sundays, and played, and merrily talked together the rest of the day! There was more love and good neighbourhood then amongst men than there is now. There was not then so much deceit, and cozening, and oppressing, and covetousness in the world, there was more peace, and plenty, and a better world it was than now.'

Matters of peace and plenty change often in the same age. And certainly you have as little hindrance now, from being as good as you have a mind to be, as ever your forefathers had. Two things I have to say to your objection.

1. If this be true that the world is so bad, which part is it of the world that you mean? Is it all, or some? Not all sure; that were too horrible censoriousness to say. Then God would presently destroy the world. Sodom had one Lot, and his family in it. Well! it is but some then that are so bad. And which part is it? Is it the godly, or the un-

godly? If godliness be naught, then heaven is naught, where there is nothing else; and then take it not ill to be shut out. If it be the ungodly that are naught, that is it that I am saying. It is time then to leave it, and to turn to God. Is it not you yourselves that make the complaint that are the men that make the world so bad? Is it not you that are so covetous and worldly that you have nothing for the poor, and no time to spare for the work that you were made for; nor scarce any room, to think or speak of the life to come? Is it not you that have so little charity that you even hate men for loving and serving God, and seeking diligently to save their souls? It is true that there was never greater wickedness in the world than since there hath been so much preaching. But what is that wickedness and in whom? It is the despising and disobeying the calls of God, and the hating and neglecting of a holy life. Those that are saved by the Gospel, may say that it was a happy message unto them; but those that slight it, and wilfully sin in the openest light, may well say that it is a bad world with them; and worse it is, and will be for ever, if they be not converted, than if they had never heard the Gospel. It is you, and such as you, that despise the mercies of the Lord, that make it a bad world; and then you impudently complain of it, and charge it on them that will not be as bad as yourselves; and take away the candle and shut the windows, that the light may not trouble you.

2. Well! but say you the world was better when there was less preaching, and less ado about the serving of God, and our salvation. I do not believe you, and I will tell you why, yea, why I am certain that your words are false.

1. Because you contradict the Lord. God saith those times are best when there is most of the light of the Gospel, and most helps for our salvation, and when the people are most holy. The increase of light and holiness is a principal part of the glory of the kingdom of Christ, and of the promises to the Gospel church, as you may see, Isa. ix. 2. xxxvi. 26. xlii. 6. lx. 3. Matt. iv. 16. Luke ii. 32. John iii. 19, 20. The word of God is the greatest blessing under heaven, together with a heart to obey and practise it. "Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it;" Luke xi. 28. Psal. i. 1, 2. cvi. 3. cxix. 1. God himself pronounceth them blessed that meditate day and night in his

law, and that make it their whole delight; and because of the increase of light and holiness, extollet the times of the Gospel far above those of the law, affirming the least in this kingdom of God to be greater as to the honour and privilege of his station, than the prophets, or John Baptist; Matt. xi. 11, 12. And would you wish me to believe such ignorant men as you, before the God of heaven that contradicteth you?

2. I will not believe you, because your objection is nothing but a blasphemous accusation of the living God. If it were true that preaching is bad, it is Christ then that is bad that doth command it. But I am sure that Christ is not bad; and that such as blaspheme him do it to their cost. It is he that hath laid a necessity on us, and woe be unto us if we preach not the Gospel (1 Cor. ix. 16.); and that chargeth us to feed the flock of God; 1 Pet. v. 2. Yea, the Spirit chargeth us "before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom, that we preach the word, and be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." If any one be to be blamed for all this preaching and stir for heaven, it is Christ that chargeth it so strictly upon us. And if thou dare lay the blame upon the Lord, speak out, and stand to it at judgment.

3. I know it is false that you say, that the world is the worse for all this preaching and godliness, because it is against the very office of Christ, and of the Holy Ghost. Christ was a diligent preacher himself, and dare you accuse him for it? He came into the world to bring us the light of heavenly truth: and dare you say that it were better be without it? It is the work of the Holy Ghost to illuminate and sanctify men; and do you think that he doth us hurt? Christ died to wash and purify by the word and Spirit, the church which is his body, that he might present it spotless to the Father (Eph. v. 26, 27.); and darest thou say that Christ came to do us harm? By this despising of his benefits, thou shewest that thou hast yet no part in him or in his saving benefits, but art in the gall of bitterness and bond of thy iniquities, and thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

4. Moreover thou art not to be believed, because you speak against the experience of all the prophets and apostles of Christ. David had rather be "a doorkeeper in the house

of God, than dwell in the tents of wickedness;" and judged "a day in his courts to be better than a thousand;" (Psal. lxxxiv. 10.) and accounted them the blessed men that might even dwell in the house of God, and be daily taken up in holy praise and worship; Psal. lxxv. 4. xcii. 13. xxiii. 6. When he was forced from the house and public worship of God, it was his daily lamentation, and he fainteth, and panteeth, and longeth after the house and worship of God again. "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.—Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will be still praising thee. Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee, in whose heart are the ways of them;" Psal. xlii. lxxxiv. 2—5. The prophet Isaiah saith, "In the way of thy judgments O Lord have we waited for thee: the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee; with my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early." This was the mind of all the prophets and apostles; and God hath told us that it is the practice of all blessed men to "meditate on God's word day and night;" Psal. i. 2. And yet you will say that it was a better world when there was less of this! O self-condemning hypocrites! Why do you so much profess to honour the prophets, apostles, and martyrs of Christ, if you think that they were the troublers of the world, and that their doctrine and practice makes us worse? Why do you honour them with the name of saints, and yet despise both their doctrine and practice in those that do but endeavour seriously to imitate them? Why keep you holidays in remembrance of the dead saints, and say that the world is the worse for the living saints? O horrible hypocrisy! to honour their names, and hate their doctrine and course of life, and say that the world was never good since it was troubled with such as they! Do we trouble you with our preaching, and praying, and our stir for heaven? How would Christ and his apostles have troubled you, that went so far beyond us in all these, and made a greater stir than we, and turned the world (as their enemies charged them) upside down! Acts xvii. 6. So busy was Christ in preaching and doing the work of God, that he neglected to eat his meat for it; John iv. 34. and his fleshly kindred would have laid

hands on him, as if he had been beside himself; Márk iii. 21. It seems if you had then lived, you would have been among the wicked enemies of Christ and of his disciples, and have said, 'It was never a good world, since these busy fellows made so much ado with their religion!'

5. Moreover, you speak against the inward feeling and certain experience of all true Christians in the world. They all have tasted and found that excellence in the holy ways and ordinances of the Lord, that they value them above all the world. With David they esteem them above gold and silver; Psal. cxix. 72. With Solomon they say that "all the things that we can desire are not to be compared to them;" Prov. iii. 15. viii. 11. And with Job they value the word of God above their necessary food; Job xxiii. 12. And with Paul they "count all things loss and dung in comparison of the excellent knowledge of Christ;" Phil. iii. 7, 8. They know that it is a thousand times better with them, since God converted them to a holy life than it was before, as well as you know that you are better in your health, than you were in sickness. Try whether you can make men that ever were among those where plague, and war, and famine reigned, to believe that it was never a good world since this plague, and war, and famine ceased. You may as soon make wise men believe this, as make experienced godly men, to believe that it is worse with them for their turning to the Lord, and living holy, heavenly lives. You can never by all your doting and self-conceited prating, make those believe whom God hath sanctified, that they were in a better case before, when they were the slaves of satan, and served sin, and were under the wrath and curse of God. They feel that within them that will never suffer them to believe you. The health of their recovered souls; their experience of the goodness of the ways of God; the comforts they have had in the pardon of sin and the hopes of glory, do make them know that you talk distractedly, when you tell them that they were better before, or that the world is the worse for the grace of God.

6. And we cannot believe you, when you speak evil of a holy course, because your words are against all religion, and common reason; and much more, destructive of the Christian faith. If God be not to be loved with all our hearts, and served with our greatest care, then he is not God; or then there is no such thing as religion to be regarded. A

God that is worse than the creature, is no God. If we must not “ seek first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness ” thereof (Matt. vi. 33), as Christ hath commanded, then it is in vain to seek it at all. If there be no heaven or hell, let us lay by all religion. But if there be, that man that thinks it not worth his greatest care and diligence to be saved, doth forfeit the reputation of his reason with his soul. Will you believe that man that saith he believeth that there is an everlasting glory to be sought, and made sure of in this life of our pilgrimage and warfare, and yet thinks it not worth our seeking for above all, and worthy all our cost and labour? He speaks a gross and blockish contradiction. A heaven no better than earth, is no heaven. A heaven that is not worthy the labour of a holy life, is no heaven. And a God that is not worthy of all that we can do, is no God. Either plainly say that you are Pagans and worse, and believe not any life but this; or else live as Christians, if you will be called Christians; say not that you believe there is a hell; if you think a holy life too dear to escape it.

7. Yea this is not all, but your words do tend to brutishness itself. Pagans did believe (for the most part) a life after this. And Julian that apostate infidel himself doth prescribe to all his idol priests a very strict and religious life, according to the religion which he owned, and professeth that all care, and temperance, and piety should be used to please God, and obtain the happiness to come. And shall men called Christians take the very infidels for Puritans, and be worse than heathens? If we have not another life to look after, then what are we but beasts that perish? If you think that you die like beasts, call yourselves beasts, and never more own the name of men. If you are not beasts, but men, then have you souls to save or lose, to be happy or miserable for ever. And is it not worth all our care and labour to look after them?

8. Another reason why I will never believe you, that the world was better when there was less preaching and religion, is because you speak against the very end and nature of preaching and religion. For the word of God is written and preached to this very end, to make men better. And is that the way to undo the world, to persuade them to amend? O impudent, malignant tongues! What doth the word of God

speak against but sin? Doth it any where speak against any thing that is good? or doth it any where command you any thing that is bad? Let the bitterest enemy of God upon earth say so and prove it if he can. I here in defiance of the devil, and all his instruments and servants, challenge them in their bitterest malice, to say the worst they can of the Gospel, or of true religion, and prove that ever it encouraged men to sin, or that ever any was a loser by it! O wonderful! Must the God of heaven indite such laws against all evil, condemning it, and threatening damnation for it; and yet will these wretches have the faces to say that it is long of the Scripture or of religion that the world is evil? What! will preaching against your wickedness make you wicked? If it do, be it known to the faces of you, that it is you, and not preaching, that shall be one day found to be the cause, and be condemned for it. Must princes and parliaments make laws to hang thieves and murderers; and when they have done, will you say it is long of them and their laws that men are robbed and murdered? Why, this is not yet so impudently unjust as you deal with God. For they threaten but hanging, and he threateneth everlasting damnation against sin; and executeth it on all the unconverted, as sure as he threateneth it. And would you have him yet do more to testify his dislike of sin? Tell me, thou that blasphemest the holy commandments of thy Creator, Wouldst thou have him do more than everlastingly to damn unconverted sinners to prove that he is no friend or cause of sin? What should he do more? Is there a greater plague than hell to threaten? Or wouldst thou have him do more to shew how much he loveth goodness, than to command it, and persuade men daily to it, and to promise everlasting glory for their reward? Is there any greater reward to be promised? I tell thee, blasphemer, to the justifying of my Lord, that all the world hath never done the thousandth part against men's faults as God hath done. Never were there stricter laws against them, than his laws; and never more terrible executions. And yet wilt thou say, that it is long of God, or Scripture, or religion, that the world is naught? If thou stay a little longer impenitently in thy blasphemy, till death have but given thee the mortal stroke (and it is hard at hand), thou shalt then be answered in another manner, and God will ea-

sily justify himself, and stop all such vile and arrogant mouths, and confute thee with an everlasting vengeance. Remember that thou wast forewarned.

9. Yea, furthermore, you are confuted and shamed by your own complaints. What is it that you quarrel with the law of God for? Is it not because it is so strict, and forbiddeth sin, and threateneth damnation for it? Is it not because it requireth so much goodness, and telleth you that none of the unconverted, ungodly shall be saved? And what is it that you quarrel with the godly for? Is it not for serving God, and because they will not be as bad as others? And yet the same tongues dare blaspheme the laws of God, and say the world is the worse for them! And the same tongue dares revile the godly as the cause that the world is so bad! What should one say to such unreasonable men, that will at the same time murmur at the holy word and ways of God, because they contradict the wickedness of the world, and threaten them with hellfire because they repent not, and yet say it is long of this very word, and the preaching and obeying of it in a holy life, that the world grows worse? O impudent mouths! that at once revile the servants of Christ, because they will not be as bad as others, and yet say that it is they that make the world so bad. God will very shortly stop such unreasonable mouths.

10. And if your words were true, then it would follow that all God's grèatest mercies are worth nothing, yea, that they are a hurt to us, and curses rather than blessings. What is the Gospel worth, if the reading, and preaching, and practising of it do make the world worse, and only trouble men? What are all God's ordinances worth, if this be the fruit of them? And why hath he appointed pastors and teachers for his church, if this be all the good they do? Nay, what is Christ himself worth to the world, if those are the worst men that most obey him, and study his word, and diligently seek him! O unworthy souls! Is this all your thanks to God for a Christ when you are lost by sin? and for the Gospel that offereth you everlasting life? and for the ministry of your pastors that would teach you the way of life? May we not take up the prophet's exclamation, Isa. i. 2. "Hear, O heavens, and give ear O earth: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib; but this

people doth not know the Lord, nor consider." Your beast doth not take his provender to be naught for him, and rather choose to be without it. And you are worse than beasts in your dealing with the Lord ; and when he hath provided you a Christ, a Gospel, teachers, and holy ordinances, even the most precious things in the world, you unthankfully refuse them, yea, and reproach them ; and take them to be naught for you, and say that it is long of them that the world is so bad ! O horrid ingratitude ! when miserable souls are in the captivity of sin and satan, and within a few steps of everlasting fire, the God of mercy sends his Son, his word, and ministers, to help them out, and set them free, and save them from hell before it be too late : and what entertainment have they ? They are reviled by these wretches as if they came to make them worse, and do them a mischief, and not to save them ! Righteous is the Lord that condemneth such as would not be saved, and as took salvation for an injury. And just were God, if he should take away the Gospel, and his ministers, and his people, from so unthankful and unworthy a generation as this that are weary of them, and say they are the troublers of the world, and think that they do them more hurt than good ; and as the Gadarenes by Christ, desire him to depart out of their coasts ; Matt. viii. 34. Be content awhile, unworthy souls ! you shall not long be troubled with a Christ, or with the Gospel, or with preaching, or with praying, or with the company of these precise people, that you so much dislike. Sleep on but a few nights more, and pass on but a few days further, and you shall come to a place before you look for it, where you shall never have their company more, and where you shall be out of the reach of preaching, and praying, and holiness, and hope. And in the mean time, were it not for the sakes of those whom God will convert and save, this troublesome Gospel and holy people should be taken from you, and given to a people that will be more thankful and more fruitful, because " you put it from you, and have judged yourselves unworthy of everlasting life ;" Acts xiii. 46. Matt. xxi. 41. No thanks to you that England is not like the Indians, and as miserable as you would have it.

11. And why should we believe you when we see that you judge clean contrarily for your bodies, than you do for your souls ? I have never heard any of you say, It was ne-

ver a good world since our land was fruitful, and since so much corn came to the market. It was a better world when men had nothing but roots to feed on. And yet would you be believed, when you say that it was better when men had not so much of the Scripture, and of Christ and holiness, the food, the life, the health of souls?

12. And I the less believe you, because I find that this hath been the common speech of others in all former ages. They that lived in the days of your fathers, said so of the former times, 'It was formerly a better world than now.' And if you had lived in those days of your fathers' forefathers, you would have heard them say the same. It is common with men to feel the evil that is present, and to praise the days that are past, whose evil they felt not, or have forgotten. But hear what God saith, Eccles. vii. 10. "Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this." "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall be done, and there is no new thing under the sun;" chap. i. 9.

13. And little cause have we to believe you, when we have present experience that your words are false. We see that those are the best that are most godly. He is blind that seeth not an exceeding difference betwixt them and such as you that speak against them, Do not we see that they are sober, when some of you are drunken? and that they are seeking heaven when you are seeking the world? and that they are providing for their souls and pleasing God, and employed in the most sweet and heavenly works, while you are pampering the flesh, or making provision to satisfy its lusts? Do we not hear their speeches are of God, and their salvation, and things that edify, while you curse or swear, or talk filthily, or idly or unprofitably like dreaming or distracted men? And yet would you make us believe that you are as good as they, and that religion makes men worse?

But you say, that for all this they are secretly as bad as others. Foolish malice! If it be secret how do you know it? If you know it, how is it secret; and it is marvel that you do not make it known! Is it not easy to say so by a Job, or a Samuel, or by Christ himself, if saying so may serve turn, and a wicked tongue may pass for truth? You may say that in secret I commit all the sins imaginable; and how

can I disprove you, when I have no witness, but only by desiring you to prove it if you can? But O happy are the servants of the Lord, that are even in secret always in the presence of their Judge, who will bear witness for them, and justify them against malignant tongues!

But you say, that they are as covetous as other men, though they are more religious. But this is as shameful a falsehood as the former. Do we not see the contrary in the open fruits? Covetous men are the forwardest to call others covetous, because they would have nobody hinder or cross them in their covetous desires or designs. And then they are saying, ‘O such a professor used me thus, and such a one did thus;’ and usually they partially relate the case as their own covetous hearts incline them passionately to judge it. And perhaps they may meet with a worldly hypocrite, that seemeth religious; which is no more to the disgrace of religion, than Ham was in the family of Noah, or Absalom in the house of David, or Judas in the family of Christ. Do not you call yourselves Christians yourselves? And yet Christianity is never the worse, because you are wicked that profess it. But sure I am that the servants of Christ are not comparable to you in covetousness. For as I find God describing them in his word, to be a people “dead to the world, whose conversation is in heaven.” so I see that they can spare time from worldly business, while “they and their household serve the Lord;” and so cannot you. They are seeking heaven, when you are seeking earth. And we may know what a man loveth, if we know what he seeketh. And again I must bear witness from my own experience, that in this place where I live, I have reason to believe, that where other men of their ability give a penny to the poor for charitable uses, those that you call precise, and think too religious, do give six, if not twice six, and some of them much more than I will express. There are few weeks but we have occasion to try it by voluntary collections for some needy persons, or charitable uses; and therefore we have much opportunity to know; besides contributions at sacraments, and other public occasions.

But you say, that in former times there was more love among neighbours than is now. Then there was more familiarity and kindness, and less hatred, and malice, and contention, than now. I answer, Am I not sure by constant ex-

perience, that there is far more love among the godly than among you? Do I not see how dear they are to one another, and how sweetly and familiarly they converse together, and join in prayer and holy exercises, and confer about their everlasting state? Do I not see that they are ten times more liberal to relieve each other in distress than you are? Many and many a time I have seen them give ten or twenty shillings in collections to relieve godly people in distress, when those of you that are richer give but two-pence or a groat to your companions in the like collections. And what makes them be so much together, if there be not love among them? I profess to you I never yet saw any thing that is worthy the name of love and peace among any other sort of men.

But perhaps you will say, that there are contentions and differences among them about religion, which the world was never troubled with before. To which I answer, 1. What differences or contentions do you see among them in this town or parish? Among five hundred people that you count precise, what one is there among us that is either Anabaptist, or Separatist, or Antinomian, or Arminian, or of any other sect? What one that separateth from any ordinance of public worship? What differences do you know among us? Is there here any more churches than one? Do you hear any contendings? Do you see any thing like a difference among us all? For my part, I know of none. Nor but of one in the parish (that is turned from us), which is a simple, ignorant, harmless man, that turned Anabaptist. For as for the apostate infidels that join with you that are ungodly, we have nothing to do with them, but lament their misery.

14. Another thing that hindereth our belief of you, is, that we see that it is only ignorant or wicked men that are of this opinion, and say that the world is the worse for godliness, or the preaching of the Gospel. Not a man saith so that knoweth what he saith, and that ever felt the power and sweetness of the Gospel upon his soul. But only those that are blinded by the world and serve the flesh, and are drowned in lust, and know not what they speak against. And shall we regard the judgment of such men?

15. And moreover, when you say that the world was better when there was less godliness and teaching, you contradict all history, and therefore are not to be believed. You know not well what is before you; much less do you know

what hath been in your forefathers' days. Be it known to you, we have as full advantage to know that as you have. Many and many a large volume have I read concerning the state of the world before us, which tells us of far greater wickedness in our forefathers' days than are in these. If you will not believe me, I will shew it to any of you, that can read and understand, at any time when you will come to me. I will shew you the words of the chroniclers, and historians of those ages, that make more lamentable complaints of the vices of those times, and tell us of far more evil then, and of a far greater scarcity of good, than can be truly spoken concerning us. And are you that never saw those days, to be believed before them that saw them?

16. And I am sure also that you speak falsely, because you make the most barbarous heathens to be most happy, and the worst of men to be the best. If it be best where there is the least religion, and least teaching, or meddling with holy things, then are the naked Indians the best, and the cannibals that live on the flesh of men. These be they that are least troubled with preaching and religion. And if you think that these miserable souls are best and most happy, I pray you go to them, and be happy with them. And by my consent the magistrate shall promote your happiness and send you thither.

17. And would you have us believe you, when you contradict yourselves? Out of your own mouths will we silence or condemn you. It is Christ that teacheth us to be holy. And do you not pretend yourselves to believe in Christ? That which you dislike as a troublesome or needless thing, is nothing but serious Christianity itself. And do you not say yourselves that you are Christians? Do not you profess the articles of the Christian belief? And what do we but practise that which you profess? We do but obey that God whom you say you believe in, as the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and all things. We do but love the Lord our Saviour, whom you say you believe in as your Saviour. We do but obey the Holy Ghost that sanctifieth all that God will save, whom you also profess to believe in yourselves. We practise that communion of saints which you deride, and yet profess that you believe. We seek after the remission of sin, and that life everlasting, which you take on you to believe yourselves. And will you profess to believe

these things, and yet say they are naught, or that it was never a good world since they were regarded and practised? And do you not profess to take the ten commandments for the law of God, which all men should obey? And what do we but endeavour to obey them? All that which you hate as too much preciseness, is nothing but the obeying of these ten commandments. And O that we could do it better! And do you not use in the saying of the Lord's prayer, to pray that the name of God may be hallowed, and his kingdom come, and his will be done, yea even as it is done in heaven? And yet will you say with the same mouth, that it was never a good world since God's name was hallowed, and since his kingdom was advanced, and his laws so much regarded, and his will obeyed? O hypocrites! Is this your praying? and do you look such prayers should be accepted which you hate and speak against yourselves? You pray that you may not be led into temptation, but delivered from evil; and yet you run into temptation, and take that evil to be good. How oft have I heard men, when the Commandments have been repeated, which require us to take the Lord only for our God, and not to take his name in vain, and to remember to keep holy the Sabbath-day, to join in it as their prayer, "Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law;" and when they come home, revile those people that are willing to keep it, and that will not take God's name in vain, and forbear the keeping holy his day, as they do themselves. Either give over professing the Christian belief, and using the Lord's prayer, and praying that you may keep the commandments of God, or else give over reviling those that do it. Either say plainly that you are heathens and no Christians; or else never say that a Christian life is hurtful to the world, nor make it the matter of your reproach.

18. And I must needs say that I am the more assured that your words against religion are false, because I know that they please the devil, who is the father of lies; and are just such as he would have you speak, and would speak himself if he had but liberty, and his appearance would not mar the cause. When thou art railing at godliness, and saying that this religion is the trouble of the world, and that the servants of Christ are but a company of busy hypocrites, just so would the devil have thee speak. I can prove it fully from

the Scriptures, and from his nature and designs. You could not speak more agreeably to his mind. If he had hired you, and written down every word which he would have you speak, you could not more punctually obey him. Do you plead against holiness, and for a careless, ungodly life? Do you despise the righteous, and justify the wicked? Just so would the devil have you do. If he stood by you, and prompted you (a sindeed he doth, though you do not know it) those are the very words that he would have you say. Indeed when he is compelled the devil himself speaketh better than you, as in Acts xvi. 17. he saith, "These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation." These are better words than yours. But he is left to himself, and speaketh of his own, he speaketh just as you do. And shall we believe you when the devil sets you on, and you speak the words of the lying spirit?

19. And I the less believe you, when you say that the world is the worse for preaching and religiousness, because I know from whence this comes. You take that to be the best, that is the worst; and that to be the worst, that is indeed the best. You judge after the flesh, and take those for the best times when you have most prosperity, and may sin with the least contradiction and molestation, and be least troubled in your sensual course. These are your good days which wise men know to be your slavery and misery. It is never a good world with you, when your consciences are troubled, and your sores are lanced, and satan cannot keep his garrison in peace; and when you cannot be permitted to drink, and swear, and game, and revel without control. And if this be your good world, I had rather have a prison or a pair of stocks with Christ and the Gospel which you despise, and with the means and hopes of the world to come, than to have your good world, which is but the quietest passage to damnation. You are not yet to be believed. Stay till you see the end, and what becomes of it, and then tell us which was the good world.

20. Lastly, If all this will not serve, I will silence you and shame you, if you have any shame left. If religion and so much serving of God do make the world worse, and those be the worst times where there is most of these, then heaven would be worse than earth or hell, even the worst place in all the world. For no place hath so much holiness as heaven.

No where is there so much ado about the praise and service of God, as there is in heaven. There they do nothing else but that which you revile, and that in highest fervour and perfection. They rest not day or night saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come ;" Rev. iv. 8. Dost thou know the man on earth that is most precise, and holy, and diligent for God? Why the lowest of the saints in heaven go quite beyond him. And in good sadness, dost thou take heaven to be the worst place? and think that so much holiness will make it troublesome? Bear witness then against thyself. Out of thy own mouth art thou condemned. How canst thou expect to be admitted into heaven, that takest it for so bad a place? Thou teachest God to thrust thee back, and say to thee, ' Begone ; here is nothing but holiness, which you could not abide. You shall go to a place where religion and holiness shall not trouble you.'

Well, sirs, consider now as men of reason, of all these twenty reasons which I have given you, and then tell me, whether that be not the better world, and the better soul, where there is the most faith and holiness.

CHAPTER VI.

Holiness is the only way of Safety.

I HAVE proved to you that holiness is best for commonwealths, and given you many general undeniable evidences, to prove that it is best for all men in particular. I shall now come to the particular evidences, and shew you wherein it is that it is best for all men.

There are three sorts of good that men have to look after. The first is the security of their life and being ; the second is their moral wellbeing ; and the third is their natural wellbeing. This last also is divided into three branches, and consisteth in our profit, our honour, and our pleasure.

So that here are five several sorts of goodness to be considered of, and you will find that holiness is best, beyond all comparison, in each respect. 1. In respect of Safety. 2. In

point of Honesty. 3. In point of Gain. 4. In point of Honour. And 5. In point of Pleasure or Delight. If I prove not every one of these, then tell me, I promised more than I could perform. But if I do prove them, I look that you that read it, should promise presently to come in to God, and a holy life, and faithfully perform it.

1. And that HOLINESS IS THE SAFEST WAY, I prove thus. 1. That man is in a safer state that is delivered from the power of satan, than he that is in his bondage, and taken captive by him at his will. But all the unsanctified are in this captivity, and all the sanctified are delivered out of it; as the Scripture most expressly tell us, Ephes. ii. 1—3. “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom we also had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind,” &c. So 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26. “In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.” And Acts xxvi. 17, 18. “I send thee to open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God.” And Col. i. 13. “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.” Satan is the ruler and the jailor of the ungodly, that leadeth them to sin, and so to destruction, and keepeth them for torments at the day of wrath. And is he safe that is in the devil’s power? If he should appear to thee, and lay hold of thee, thou wouldst not think that thou wert safe. But his possession of thy soul is far more dangerous. Thou dost not believe that thou art in his power. But thy blindness sheweth it; and thy enmity to the way of holiness sheweth it; and thy ungodly life doth fully shew it; and the Scripture affirmeth it of all such; and what need there any further proof? But the sanctified are all delivered from this slavery; and though the devil may rage against them, he shall not prevail.

2. Moreover, those that are united to Jesus Christ, and are become the living members of his body, are certainly

safer than those that are yet strangers to him, and have no special interest in him. But all that are sanctified are thus united to Christ, and made his members; and all the unsanctified have no part in him. "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life;" 1 John v. 12. John xv. 6, 7, 9, 10. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love." "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you;" ver. 14. "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water, by the word; that he might present it to himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. No man ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church. For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones;" Eph. v. 25—27. 29. 30.

Judge by these passages whether the sanctified are not safe. If the love of Christ, and his merits, and his power cannot keep them safe, then nothing can. If the Saviour cannot save them, none can. Is not the very flesh of Christ safe? Are not the members of his body safe? Are not his friends, his spouse, and beloved safe? If Christ can save us we are safe. For who can conquer him? or who can take us out of his hands? John x. 28. If he "be for us, who shall be against us?" and if he justify us, who shall condemn us? Rom. viii. 33—35.

But is it so with the ungodly? No; they have no part nor lot in this matter, but are in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, because "their heart is not right in the sight of God;" Acts viii. 21. 23.

Moreover, he that hath escaped the curse of the law, and hath his sins forgiven him, and is justified from all things that could by the law be charged on him, is safer than he that is under the curse, and hath all his sins yet lying on his soul. But the first of these is certainly the case of the sanctified, and the other of the unsanctified. "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written,

Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.—Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us ;” Gal. iii. 10. 13. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God ;” Rom. iii. 23. And Mark iv. 12. shews, that the unconverted have not their sins forgiven them. “ He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already ;” John iii. 18. And Acts xxvi. 18. “ To open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in me.” “ There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, that walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit ;” Rom. viii. 1. Abundance more such passages of holy Scripture do assure us that all the unsanctified are unpardoned, and all the sanctified are justified, and delivered from the curse. And which of these are in the safer state ?

Did one of you owe ten thousand pounds more than you were worth, or had you committed twenty known felonies or murders, would you think yourselves safe without a pardon ? Would you not be looking behind you, and afraid of almost every man you see, lest he came to apprehend you ? O what a case is that man in that hath so many thousand sins to answer for ! and hath such a load of guilt upon his soul ! and so many terrible threatenings of the law in force against him ? Do you not fear every hour, lest death arrest you, and bring you to the prison of the bottomless pit ? But the sanctified is delivered from this danger. A thousand sins indeed were against us ; but we have a pardon of them all to shew. In Christ we have “ redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins ;” 1 Col. i. 14. The law hath nothing now against us, and therefore we are safe.

4. Those are safer that are dearly beloved of the Lord, and reconciled to him, and taken for his children, than those that are his enemies, and hated by him, and under his displeasure. But most certainly the former is the state of all the sanctified, and the latter is the state of the ungodly.

You shall see both in the words of God, Psal. v. 4, 5. “ Thou art not a God that hast pleasure in wickedness ; neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight : thou hatest all the works of iniquity.” “ My

defence is of God which saveth the upright in heart. God judgeth the righteous ; and God is angry with the wicked every day ;" Psal. vii. 10, 11. "Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness ;" Psal. xlv. 7. "Those mine enemies that would not I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me ;" Luke xix. 27. "We were by nature the children of wrath ;" Ephes. ii. 3. A hundred more such places shew you the state of the unsanctified.

But how different is the case of the renewed upright soul ! "Ye are the temple of the living God : as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty ;" 2 Cor. vi. 16—18. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God ;" John i. 12. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ ;" Rom. viii. 16, 17. "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels ; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him ;" Mal. iii. 17. "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more ;" Heb. viii. 12. "And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable, and irreprovable in his sight ;" Col. i. 21, 22. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered ; blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile ;" Psal. xxxii. 1, 2. "He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of mine eye ;" Zech. ii. 8.

Judge now by these plain expressions from the Lord, who it is that are in the safer state, the godly or the ungodly. Is he the safer that is hated by the God of heaven, or he that is most dearly loved by him ? He that is under his displeasure, or he that is his delight ? Why man, if God be against thee, thou art no where safe ! not in the strongest castle ! not in the greatest army ! not in the highest dignity ! not in the

most merry company ! Thou knowest not but a commission is gone out for death to strike thee in thy next recreation, or fit of mirth ! How knowest thou but death is ready to strike, while thou art eating, or drinking, or talking, or sleeping ? Thou hast no security from an angry God. Till he be reconciled, thou art no where safe ! This may be thy fatal day or night for aught thou knowest. And if once the mortal blow be struck, and thy soul be taken from thy body unrenewed, O man, where then wilt thou appear ! O wonderful stupidity ! that thou dost not eat thy bread in fear, and do thy work in fear, and sleep in fear, and live in fear, till thou be sanctified !

But to the soul that hath God for his security, what can be dangerous ? or what condition (while he keeps close to God) can be unsafe ? “ The Father that gave us unto Christ is greater than all, and no man can take us out of his hands ;” John x. 28, 29. Conquer heaven, and conquer the saints ! There is their city, their garrison, their conversation ; Phil. i. 20. Heb. xi. 10. 16. What enemy, what policy, what power can endanger him, that God will save and hath undertaken for ? We were never safe one day or hour, till we were friends with God. “ The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms ;” Deut. xxxiii. 27. “ God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble ; therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. — God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved. God shall help her, and that right early. — The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge ;” Psal. xli. 1, 2. 5. 7. “ He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in him will I trust ;” Psal. xci. 1, 2. This is the confidence, and joy, and glory of the saints. “ I will sing of thy power, yea I will sing aloud of thy mercies in the morning, for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble. Unto thee, O my strength will I sing : for my God is my defence, and the God of my mercy ;” Psal. lix. 16, 17. “ Thou art my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation ;” Psal. lxxxix. 26. See Psal. xxvii. 5. lxi. 2. lxii. 2. 6. 7. xciv. 22. Prov. xviii, 10. “ The name of the Lord is a strong tower : the righteous run into it and are safe ;” chap. xxi. 31.

“Safety is of the Lord;” Psal. iv. 8. Quietly may we repose ourselves to rest, for it “is the Lord only that maketh us dwell in safety.” But is it thus with the ungodly man? O no! When “they say peace and safety to themselves, suddenly destruction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape;” 1 Thess. v. 3. “For their rock is not like our rock, even our enemies themselves being judges;” Deut. xxxii. 31. “Why else do they desire in times of danger that they were in the case of the servants of the Lord? If they thought themselves as safe as the regenerate, why do they wish at the hour of death, that they might but “die the death of the righteous, and their latter end might be as his;” Numb. xxiii. 10.

Moreover, he is certainly more safe, that is a heir of the promises, and hath the word of God engaged for his safety, than he that hath no promise from God at all, nor any such security to shew. But all the faithful have interest in the promises, in which the ungodly have no share. Surely he is safe to whom the Lord hath promised safety. O what a precious treasure might I here open, to shew you the safety of true believers? I will cull out but a few of the promises for a taste. “The turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me, shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil;” Prov. i. 32, 33. “Whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe;” chap. xxix. 35. “My son, let them not depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion; so shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace unto thy neck: then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble. When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet. Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked when it cometh. For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken;” chap. iii. 21—23. “The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him, the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders;” Deut. xxxiii. 12. “Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he shall sustain thee, he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved;” Psal. lv. 22. “God is in the generation of the righteous;” Psal. xiv. 5. “The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry. The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth and

delivereth them out of all their trouble. Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of all. He keepeth all his bones—— Evil shall slay the wicked, and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate;” Psal. xxxiv. 15. 17. 19, 20. “For the Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints, they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off;” Psal. xxxvii. 28. “Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace. But the transgressors shall be destroyed together. The end of the wicked shall be cut off. But the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord; he is their strength in the time of trouble. And the Lord shall help them and deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him;” ver. 37. 39. 43. “My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever;” Psal. lxxiii. 26. “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget; yet will not I forget thee. He hath said, I will not fail thee nor forsake thee;” Isa. xlix. 15. “Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink,” &c. Heb. xiii. 5. Matt. vi. 25. “Fear not them which kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul——The very hairs of your head are all numbered;” Matt. x. 28. 30. “Fear thou not, for I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness;” Isa. xli. 10. See ver. 13, 14. chap. xliii. 1, 2. “Fear not, for I have redeemed thee. I have called thee by thy name: thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burnt,” &c. “The Lord preserveth the way of his saints;” Prov. ii. 3. “O love the Lord all ye his saints; for the Lord preserveth the faithful;” Psal. xxxi. 23. “He preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hands of the wicked;” Psal. xcvi. 10. “The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him: to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desires of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them. The Lord preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy;” Psal. cxlv. 11—23. “Say not, I will recompense evil; but wait on the Lord, and he will save

thee ;" Prov. xx. 22. " He is faithful that hath promised ;" Heb. x. 23.

I hope the believer will not be weary to read over all these precious promises, which are his security from God, for soul and body. I sum up all in that one, 1 Tim. iv. 8. " Godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." Judge whether godliness be the safest state. Can a man of so many promises be unsafe ? But instead of these the ungodly are threatened with everlasting vengeance.

6. He is safer that hath continually a guard of angels, as certainly all the faithful have, than he that hath none, but is a prisoner of the devil, as the ungodly are.

Hear the Scriptures : " The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them ;" Psal. xxxiv. 7. " He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands lest thou dash thy foot against a stone ;" Psal. xci. 11, 12. " Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones : for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven ;" Matt. xviii. 10. " Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation ?" Heb. i. 14. And have the wicked any such attendance for their security ? No : but a fearful captivity to the devil.

7. Lastly, That is the safest state where man is safe from the greatest evil. Everlasting misery is the great evil which the godly are initially saved from. They are liable to afflictions as well as others, but not to damnation, and therefore they are safe. They must be sick and die as well as others ; but they shall escape eternal death. Yea, they are already " passed from death to life" (1 John iii. 14.), and have " eternal life begun with them ;" John xvii. 3. " He that hath the Son hath life ;" 1 John v. 12. " Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life ;" ver. 22. " Marvel not at this : for the hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth ; they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation ;" ver. 28, 29. " The ungodly are not so ; but are like the chaff which

the wind driveth away: therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous; but the way of the ungodly shall perish;" Psal. i. 3—6.

If yet you are unresolved whether godliness be the only way of safety, I dare say it is because you believe not the holy Scriptures; for there the doubt is as fully decided as any one in all the world. O how blessed is the state of the poorest, most afflicted saint, that may always say, 'My soul is safe! If my health, or wealth, or friends be gone, yet am I safe from everlasting misery. Other things I shall have as God seeth best for his honour and my spiritual good; but salvation I may be sure of, if I abide in Christ.' What needs he fear, that hath escaped hell! But O the dreadful case of the ungodly! that are passing to damnation when they never think of it! Their bodies may be strong, their riches great, and they may fare sumptuously every day; Luke xvi. 19. But O what a case are their poor souls in! and where will they be when this mirth is ended! ver. 25. They are not safe from hell one hour.

CHAPTER VII.

Holiness is the only Honest Way.

WE have tried whether the way of godliness or ungodliness be the safest. Let us next try which is the most honest, of which one would think we should never meet with a man so shameless as to make a question. But experience telleth us, that such there are, yea, and that they are very common. Even in their reproaching of a holy life, they will join the boastings of their own honesty, and say, 'Though we swear, or are drunk now and then, and make not such a stir about God's service and our salvation, yet we are as honest as these more precise people, that make more ado, and censure us as ungodly.' As truly and wisely as if a common whore should say, 'I am as honest as these precise people that will not play the harlot, as I do.' And as wisely as if a thief should say, 'Though I steal for need, I am as honest as these pre-

cise people that will not steal.' But yet we have this advantage by these shameless boasts, that still the name of honesty is in credit, and the worst men honour it, by pretending to it, while they dishonour themselves by their renouncing the thing itself, and by the impudency of their pretences.

Honesty is nothing but true virtue, or the moral goodness of the mind or actions. An honest man and a good man is indeed all one *καλὸς* or *καλοκαγαθὸς* with the Greeks; one that is both inwardly virtuous, and manifests it in the cleanness and integrity of his life, in the sight of men. All men, for aught I can perceive, would be accounted honest. This reputation honesty hath amongst its vilest enemies, that they approve the name, and would not appear to be its enemies, till they have put some other name upon it. While they hate honesty, and persecute it, they would be called honest men themselves. And therefore by the consent of all the world, friends and foes, that is the best way which is the most honest.

O that you would all but stand to this, in the choosing of your course, and in your daily practice! Will you all agree upon a holy life, if I prove it past all doubt to be the most honest? O that you would! Yea, if I prove that there is no man truly honest in the world, that is not truly godly. If you would stand to this, you would soon be changed. Indeed it is nothing but dishonesty that we would have you changed from. And if you will not stand to this, but will refuse honesty when you know it, for shame lay by the name of honesty, and wish not men to call you honest any more. Either be what you would be called; or give men leave to call you as you are. Let us come then to the trial, and see who is indeed the honest man, the godly or the ungodly.

1. I have already told you, that God who is the most infallible Judge, hath given his sentence on his people's side. If you will think yourselves that it is not those that thieves and harlots call honest that are so likely to be honest, as those that wise men and virtuous men call so; we have then far greater reason to conclude, that it is not those that you call honest, that are so fit to be judged such, as those that God calls so. How say you? Will you not freely give us leave to take God's judgment or word before yours? If not, we will take leave. And God calls all the ungodly by the name

of evil and wicked men ! and the godly are they that he calleth upright, good, and honest. The whole Scripture, you know, if you know any thing of it, speaketh in this language, It is they that “hear the word and keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience, that receive it into honest and good hearts;” Luke viii. 15. This is the life that is “acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, which is in all godliness and honesty.” These are inseparable, godliness and honesty; 1 Tim. ii. 3. Indeed the Greek word here is that which signifieth gravity and seemliness of behaviour; but that which is frequently translated ‘good’ is it which signifieth the truly honest. And you know none of the ungodly are ever called good in Scripture, but clean contrary. “The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them, but transgressors shall be taken in their own naughtiness;” Prov. xi. 6. So ver. 18—20. “The wicked worketh a deceitful work, but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward. As righteousness tendeth to life, so he that pursueth evil, doth it to his own death. They that are of a froward heart are an abomination to the Lord; but such as are upright in their way, are his delight.” Every where you see how God abhorreth the ungodly, and extolleth those that love and fear him. Christ calleth the ungodly “evil men, that out of the evil treasure of their hearts do bring forth evil things;” Matt. xii. 35. All is evil; the life evil, the heart evil, and the man evil. “The righteous man is more excellent than his neighbour, but the way of the wicked seduceth them;” Prov. xii. 26. And Psal. 16, David called the godly “the excellent, in whom is all his delight.” It is an excellent spirit that is in them (Dan. iii. 12. 14. lxiii.), and an excellent way in which they go (1 Cor. xii. 31.), and an excellent knowledge which the Spirit’s illumination causeth them to attain; Phil. iii. 18. Ephes. iii. 18, 19. You have God’s judgment of the case, if that will satisfy you, who it is that is the best and most honest man, the holy or the unholy.

2. Do you think that that man is an honest man, that will deny you your due, and rob you of all that is your own? or rather, is not the just man the honest man, that will give every man his own? I know you will give your voices for the latter. O then take heed lest you condemn yourselves! If you be not holy, your own testimony doth condemn you. For it is only the godly that give God his own, when the un-

godly rob him of it. Hast thou not thy life, and time, and maintenance from God? Hast thou not thy reason, and thy affections, and all thy faculties from him? And should not all thou hast be employed for him? Thou art a dishonest man that grudgest, yea deniest him one day in seven, when thou owest him all. Thou art a dishonest man that givest away thy Maker's due unto his vilest enemies: that wastest thy means or strength on sin: that spendest thy precious time on vanity: that abusest his creatures to the satisfying of thy lusts, and that livest to thy flesh, when thou shouldst live to God. Thou robbest him of all which thou givest to his enemies; and of all which thou dost not use to his service. It is less dishonesty to rob thy master that trusteth thee with his goods, than to rob the Lord that trusteth thee with thy time, and parts, and all things. O blind, unworthy sinners! What makes you think him an honest man that robbeth his Maker, or denieth him his own, when you call him a dishonest man that robbeth but such silly worms as you, that in respect of God have nothing of your own? Art thou better than God, that it should be called dishonesty to wrong thee, and no dishonesty to wrong him, or deny him that which is his own? God hath an absolute title to you, and that on more accounts than one. You are his own, as you are his creatures. "All souls are mine," saith the Lord; Ezek. xviii. 4. And he hath title to thee by redemption, as well as by creation. For "to this end Christ died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord of the dead and of the living;" Rom. xiv. 9. "We are not our own; we are bought with a price; and therefore should glorify God in our bodies and our spirits which are his;" 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. "For if one died for all, then were all dead, that they which live should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him that died for them and rose again;" 2 Cor. v. 44, 45. And as you yourselves are God's own as being your Creator and Redeemer, so all that you have is his own as the bestower, or as your Master that trusteth it in your hands. "Now therefore if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure to me above all people; for all the earth is mine;" Exod. xix. 5. And saith God to Job, Job xli. 11. "Whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine; the world is mine, and the fulness thereof." "What hast thou which thou didst not receive?" 1 Cor. iv. 7. Thou

hast not a minute of time which thou owest not to God ; nor a thought, nor a word, nor a farthing of thy estate. And is it not the basest injustice and dishonesty to give these to thy flesh, and deny them to him, and think his service an unnecessary thing? If thou wilt give the world and thy lusts any thing, let it be that which thou canst truly call thine own. As God saith to the idolaters, Ezek. xvi. 18, 19. "Thou hast set mine oil, and mine incense before them ; my meat also which I gave thee," &c. so may he say to thee. It is his time which thou hast consumed in idleness and in sinful delights ; and his provision by which thou hast fed thy lusts. But the sanctified man is devoted to God. His study is to give him his own. All the business of his life which you account his overmuch strictness and preciseness, is nothing but his honesty to God, in giving him his own. You look your horse should travel for you, and your ox should labour for you, and your servant work for you, because they are your own. And shall not we give up all that we have to God, that are much more his own? Will you hang them that take your own from you, and count them honest that deal worse with God? Say not, If Christ were here we would give it him : for he hath told you how you should use all his talents in his laws ; and if you deny them to the poor, or any holy use that he requireth them, you deny them unto him. Read Matt. xxv. and x. 40—42.

3. Do you think that an unnatural man is an honest man? One that will abuse his father or mother, and scorn the bowels from which he sprung? All the world is agreed on it, that such are dishonest. "Honour thy father and mother," is called "the first commandment with promise;" Exod. xxi. 17. "He that curseth his father or mother shall surely be put to death." See Prov. xx. 20. xxx. 17. "The eye that mocketh at his father, and refuseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it." To be "without natural affections," is the brand of highest wickedness; Rom. i. 31. 2 Tim. iii. 3.

And do you not know that it is worse to be without holy affections to the God that made you, and the Christ that bought you, and to despise, forsake, or abuse the Lord? Thou hadst thy being more from him than from thy parents. They knew not how thy parts were formed! It was he that gave thee thy immortal soul: it is by him that thou hast

lived until now ; much more than on the food thou eatest, or the air thou breathest in. And art thou so unnatural as to be ungodly, and deny him thy love, and care, and service, that hath made thee ? and to call a holy, heavenly life, a needless toil ? “ Do you thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise ? Is he not thy Father that hath bought thee ? hath he not made thee, and established thee ? ” Deut. xxxii. 6. If an unholy man be an honest man, that is so unnatural as to cross the end of his creation, and deny his service to the Lord that made him ; then he is honest that spits in his father's face, and despiseth his mother that brought him forth.

4. Do you think that he is an honest man that is unthankful ? It is agreed on by all the world, that unthankfulness is a principal point of dishonesty. He is no honest man that will abuse or despise those by whom he liveth, or that have engaged him by kindness. If you were so used yourselves by one whose life or estates you had preserved, would you not say, ‘ What an unworthy wretch is this ? have I deserved this usage at his hand ? ’ Why all the unthankfulness against men in the world, is not to be compared to thy unthankfulness against God. What are the benefits which man hath given thee in comparison of his ? Did ever man do any thing for thee that is comparable to thy creation, and redemption, and offering thee salvation from everlasting misery, and a room with angels in everlasting glory ; besides every hour's mercy that ever thou hadst here in this world ? And is that an honest man that will requite this God with profaneness and ungodliness, and return him sin for all his mercies, and refuse to live a holy life ? Doth thy flesh deserve all thy care and labour, and is this God unworthy of it, and dost thou call his service a needless work ? If ingratitude can make a man dishonest, thou art then a dishonest man. But it is the business of the godly to give themselves to him that made them, and to exercise their thankfulness in their capacities, for these greatest mercies.

5. Do you think that a cruel, unmerciful man, or a loving and merciful man is the more honest ? Surely I shall here have all your voices. He that hateth those that hurt him not, and would kill them, and set their houses on fire, and carrieth malice in his face and speech, will be called an honest man but by few. And he that is loving, and studieth to do good to all about him, will be counted honest. Why

try the ungodly and the saints by this; no more malicious men in the world than the ungodly. They have an enmity even to the God that made them (Col. i. 21.), and to the Christ that bought them (Luke xix. 27.), and to the word of God that offereth them salvation, and would lead them to eternal life, and hate the knowledge of the way of life; Prov. i. 22. They are enemies to the servants of the Lord, and hate the upright that desire their salvation, and would but draw them from their sins; Prov. xxix. 10. ix. 8. They curse those that bless them, and persecute those that pray for them; Matt. v. 44. The first wicked man that was born into the world, did "kill his brother, because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous; 1 John iii. 12.

But this is not their greatest cruelty: they are enemies to their own salvation. They will run into hell in despite of Christ and all the preachers in the world. For there is but one way thither, the way of ungodliness, and that way they will go. Yea, that is not all, but bloody wretches, they would have all the country do as they do, and be damned with them. They are angry with a man if he will not live an ungodly life, and tippie, and swear, and do as they. They revile him if he will not give over his diligent serving of the Lord, which is all one as to fall out with men because They will not forfeit heaven, and run from God, and damn their souls, and all for nothing! When they might more mercifully scorn us because we will not give over eating, or that we will not cut our own throats. And are these cruel persons honest men? Is that merciless wretch an honest man, that is not content to cast away his own everlasting happiness for nothing upon his fond conceits, but must needs have others do so too? that is not content to wrong the Lord, but would have others wrong him also? The devil is honest if these be honest.

But for the godly, it is their desire, their care, their work to save themselves, and further the salvation of all others. O how they long to hear of the conversion of towns and countries! and how glad are they when they hear it! Not for any worldly commodity to themselves, but because they rejoice at the good of others. And what would they not do to promote it, which they could do?

6. Do you think that a perfidious, unfaithful man, or a faithful man that will not be hired to break his word, is the

honester man? Sure this is no hard question neither. A knight of the post, that will say and unsay, swear and forswear, and will betray his dearest friend for a groat, is taken by few for an honest man, in comparison of him that will rather die than lie and be unfaithful. Why nothing is more plain, than that all of you that are ungodly, are treacherous to the Lord himself. You are perfidious covenant-breakers: you owe him yourselves wholly on the grounds that I before expressed; and yet you are unfaithful to him: you have all from him, and you serve his enemy with it. You call him your God, and will not love, nor honour, nor serve him as your God; Mal. i. 6. You bound yourselves to him in your baptism, and many a time since, by a solemn vow or covenant; but you live in the treacherous breach of it continually. You covenanted to take the Lord for your God; and yet you will not seek him, nor be ruled by him. You covenanted to take Jesus for your Saviour; and yet will not be saved by him from your sins; Matt. i. 21. You covenanted to take the Holy Ghost for your Sanctifier, to purify your hearts and lives; and yet you resist his holy motions, and hate his sanctifying word and work, and some of you will mock at sanctification and the Spirit. And can the soul of man be guilty of greater unfaithfulness or treachery? You covenanted to forsake the flesh, the world, and the devil; and now you serve them more than Christ, and think your time is better bestowed for them, than in the service of the Lord! And is this your covenant-keeping? No traitors, no perjured wretches in the world are dishonest men, if these be not dishonest.

But now it is the care of godly men to keep the covenants they have made with God. All that which you reproach them for as too much preciseness, is but the performance of their baptismal vow. And if you be against the keeping our covenants with God, should you not be against the making them? Are you not ashamed to be so forward to engage your children to God in baptism, and when you have done, would have them be ungodly, and break the vow they make? Will you by your profession of Christianity, and coming to the Lord's table, renew your covenants with Christ yourselves, and yet make no conscience to break them, and plead against the keeping of them? We promise holiness, and the serving of God, and forsaking the world,

at every sacrament, and whenever we promise but to be Christians. And are you for the making of these promises, and yet for the breaking of them, and revilers of those that endeavour but to keep them? O fearful impudency! Is this your honesty? And would you have us all as faithless and dishonest, even with God? This was the perfidiousness of the Jews; Ezek. xvi. 8. "I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine." We are married in baptism to Christ; and is adultery with the world, and forsaking our husband, no dishonesty? Why then what is?

7. Moreover, do you think that a murderer is an honest man? I know you will say, no. Why nothing more sure than that ungodly men are murderers of themselves, and as I said, would undo others. They "hate their own souls," saith God, Prov. xxix. 24. They destroy themselves; Hos. xiii. 9. There is but one way to hell, and that they will take, and that when they are plainly told of it. Not a man in hell, but brought himself thither. And O how many do their mocks, and persuasions, and evil examples keep out of heaven, and bring to the same misery! And are these honest?

8. Do you take them to be honest men that are common cheaters or deceivers, and that in matters of greatest value? I think you do not. Why such are the ungodly. They deceive and are deceived; 2 Tim. iii. 13. They deceive themselves, by "thinking themselves something, when they are nothing;" Gal. vi. 3. They make themselves believe that they have honesty and saving grace when they have none; and that they are in a state of safety and in the favour of God, when they are near to everlasting misery, and in God's displeasure. And thus they will think, though their souls are at the stake, and the mistake be the greatest hindrance of their conversion; and though God have plainly told them in his word, whom he will save, and whom he will not. Yea, against all the plain discoveries in the Scripture, and all the marks of death upon themselves, and the open ungodliness of their lives, and all the warnings of their teachers, they will needs believe that their state is safe, and that they may be saved without conversion. What wilful self-deceivers are these! Their hearts are "deceitful above all things," and they know them not; Jer. xxii. 9. And thus they are

hardened by the deceitfulness of their own sin ; Heb. iii. 13. Sin first deceiveth them, and so killeth them ; Rom. vii. 11. If they were not foolish and deceived, they would not serve their lusts and pleasures ; 2 Tim. iii. 3. These miserable men did never yet learn that lesson, which one would think they should willingly learn, “ Let no man deceive himself ;” 1 Cor. iii. 18. They will needs think that they are Christians, and have so much religion as will save them, when God expressly telleth the curser, swearer, railer, scorner, and all that live in wilful sin, that “ If any man seem to be religious, and bridle not his tongue, (and so for other wilful sins,) but deceiveth his own heart, that man’s religion is vain ;” James i. 26.

And as they deceive themselves, so they are the common cheaters of the world. They tell them as smooth a tale as if all were fair and right, when they are pleading against God, reasoning men out of their faith and reason. When Eve had sinned, she tempted Adam. The drunkard will tempt others to be his companions ; and so will the fornicators and voluptuous sensualists. The ungodly will persuade those about him to be ungodly ; and when he hath not a word of solid reason to speak against the holy diligence of the saints, a jeer or scorn shall serve to deceive instead of reason. And if he dare not stand to what he saith to the face of a minister, or any but the ignorant that cannot gain-say him, he will take his time, and speak when none are present that can contradict him. O how many thousands are now in misery that were cheated thither by the scorns and cavils of ungodly men ! And how many thousands have lost all hopes of heaven by their deceits ! Could you but ask many thousands that are now in misery, ‘ How came you to choose so unhappy a way ?’ they would tell you, ‘ We were deceived by the words of wicked men ! The cavils and scorns of ignorant sinners have cheated us of our salvation.’ The very calling a diligent servant of Christ by the name of a Puritan or Precisian, hath kept many a thousand, even in England, from the fear and diligent serving of the Lord. And surely this is a silly argument. And are these honest men that are the factors of satan the great deceiver, in cheating themselves and others into hell ?

But the godly deal plainly with themselves and others. They are willing to know the truth of their condition, and

not to make themselves believe that which God never made them believe. They promise not salvation to themselves on any lower terms than God hath promised it. They have no hope of being saved without holiness. They set not God's mercy against his truth, nor the merits of Christ against his covenant. They know that God is better acquainted with the ways and effects of his own mercies than we are. And therefore though they hope to be saved by God's mercy, it is by his sanctifying mercy, and not to be saved without sanctification; that is, without salvation itself and the necessary means. They know that it is abundant mercy to be saved in a way of holiness, and desire no other saving mercy. Yea, they know that sanctification and glorification both, are greater mercy than glorification alone, if it were possible to be alone. This is the doctrine that the godly do believe, and this they practise, and this they teach others, and this they have learnt of God; and therefore they are no deceivers.

9. Moreover, do you think that he is an honest man that is an enemy to the public good? or rather he that is a common benefactor? The best of the heathens thought it one of the highest parts of virtue, to be serviceable to many, and devote ourselves to the common good. But wicked men are the very plagues of a land. For their sakes it is that judgments come upon us. It is they that would let in the plague of sin which would undo us. He that sets fire to the thatch, doth do no worse against your towns, than wicked men that would kindle the fire of the wrath of God by their crying sins. Read the Scriptures, and see who it was that caused Israel to perish in the wilderness, but unbelieving sinners. Who troubled Israel, and made them fly before their enemies, but one Achan? Josh. vii. And what but sin was the cause of their captivity and present desolation? Was it Lot or the Sodomites that brought down from heaven the fire of vengeance? Was it Noah or the world of the ungodly that brought down the flood? Are these honest men that provoke God to forsake the land, and are the vermin and destroyers of our peace and happiness? But you know that God hath promised his blessing to the godly, and to the places where they live oftentimes for their sakes, as Joseph's case and others tell us.

10. That man can be no honest man that wanteth the

very principle of honesty, and that intendeth not the end that is necessary to make any action truly honest : but such are all ungodly men.

(1.) The principle of true honesty is the high esteem of God and everlasting life, in our understandings, and the belief of God's revelations necessary to the attaining of that life, and the prevailing love of God in the heart, and the love of man for his sake. Without these principles of honesty, no man can be honest. How can he be an honest man that believeth not his Maker? He that taketh God for a liar, hath no reason to be taken for any better himself. For would he be thought better than he takes God himself to be? Nor can he in reason be expected to believe any man else : for none can be better than God. And is that an honest man that professeth himself a liar, and taketh all men to be so too?

And how can that be an honest man, that loveth not God so well as his fleshly lusts and pleasures? And this is the case of all the wicked. If they did not love their riches and honour, and sensual pleasures more than God, they would not keep them against his command, nor lose his favour rather than lose them, nor seek them more carefully than they seek him and his kingdom, and think of them and speak of them with more delight. And certainly he that loveth his riches, or honours, or filthy sins, better than God and heaven itself, must needs be thought to prefer them before his nearest friends, or the common good. And is that an honest man that would rather cast off father or mother than cast off his filthy sins? and that would rather forsake his chiefest friend, than forsake his vices? and would sell his friend, or the commonwealth, for a little gain or pleasure, even for a whore, or for drunkenness, or such like things? I think you would none of you say that this were an honest man, that would not leave so small a matter for the life of his friend, or for the preservation of the commonwealth. And can you expect that he should prefer any friend before God and his salvation? If he will sin against God, and sell his salvation for his sin, can you think he should more regard any man, how dear soever? There is no true honesty in that man where the love of God doth not command.

2. Moreover if the honouring and pleasing of our Lord, and the saving of our souls be not the end and principal motive of our actions, there can be no true honesty. It is essential to honesty that God be our end. If you would know what a man is, first know what he intendeth, and maketh the end and mark of his life. And so you must do if you would judge of his actions. The end is the principal ingredient that makes them good or bad. If a thief love God because he prospereth him in stealing, or because he giveth him strength and opportunity; this is a wicked love of God. If a drunkard love God for giving him his drink, and a whoremonger love God for strengthening him in his lust, will you call this honesty? Every wicked man doth make his sensual, present pleasure his principal end through all his life. If he love his neighbour, it is but carnally, as a dog loveth him that feedeth and stroketh him. If he seem to be a good commonwealth's man, it is but for vainglory or carnal accommodations; and he fighteth for his king or country but as a dog doth for his bone. If he give to the poor, it is but that which he can spare from his belly; and it is either in a common pity, or for vain applause, or he thinks by it to stop the mouth of justice, that God may let him alone in his sins, or save him after all his wickedness. This is no more an honest man, than he that makes a trade of stealing, and will pay tithes of all that he steals, or give some part to the church or poor, that God may pardon him, and save him when he hath done. All the religion, and all the charity of wicked men, is but for themselves; and that which hath no higher end than carnal self, is truly no religion or charity. It is only the sanctified man that is honest; for it is only he that is devoted to God, and doth the works of his life to please and glorify his Maker. There is more honesty in the very eating and drinking of the sanctified, than in the prayers, and sacrifices, and alms-deeds of the ungodly. Or else God would never have said as he hath done, that "unto the pure all things are pure: but to them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled" (Tit. i. 15.); and that "every creature is sanctified by the word of God and by prayer" (1 Tim. iv. 4, 5.); and that the prayer and sacrifice of the wicked is abomination to the Lord, and he abhorreth and loatheth them; when

the prayer of the upright is his delight; Prov. xv. 8. xxi. 27. Isa. i. 13. Prov. xxviii. 9. viii. 7. xi. 20. For the sanctified in their very eating and drinking do make it their end to glorify God, and to be fitted for his service; 1 Cor. x. 31. But the ungodly do all, even in their duties that seem most holy, but for a selfish, carnal end. So that it is plain that he that wanteth the necessary principles and end, that must inform an honest mind and life, can have no honesty of mind or life. "Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned;" 1 Tim. i. 5.

But perhaps you will say, that there hath been honesty found among heathens: and therefore this doctrine cannot hold. To which I answer, 1. If this were true, yet it is proved, that there is no comparison between their honesty and the true Christian's. 2. But indeed, there was never true honesty found in any ungodly man. But something that is like to honesty they may have. Materially they may do the same outward acts that honest men do; and this the world accounteth honesty, that seeth not the inside, and the ends, and therefore give the name to the matter without the form. And such may be honest '*secundum quid*,' but not '*simpliciter*.' An analogical honesty they may have, and be less dishonest than some others. And so as Robin Hood was called an honest thief that would rob none but the rich, and sometimes bring a yoke of oxen that he had stolen, and give them to the poor that had none; so may a heathen and ungodly man be honest. But men must be denominated (and so must their actions) according to what is predominant in them. And therefore we must say, if we will speak properly, that no ungodly man is honest.

If you ask, How then it comes to pass that such are accounted honest men, and that the world discerneth not the honesty that consisteth in a holy life? I answer, 1. Because that all the ungodly have an enmity to holiness. And malice blindeth men, that they cannot see the good that is in those they hate. 2. Because they do not know what godliness is, and therefore know not the honesty of it appearing in its principles, ends, and rule. For it is not effectually known by any but those that have it. 3. Because all carnal men do judge after the flesh; and as they are to themselves their highest end, so they do judge of all things else,

according to that end. He is an honest man with them that is for them, and furthereth their commodity, or answereth their desire. Mark them whether they judge not those to be the most honest men, that suit themselves most to their minds and wills, and say and do as they would have them. And so among thieves there are none so honest men as their companions, nor among drunkards none so honest as they that will sit with them, and waste their time, and prate like idiots over a pot of ale, forgetting that death and judgment are posting toward them while they sit there. And among harlots their mates seem honest. So that dishonest men are not fit judges of honesty. That which is fitted to their corrupted mind is best with them. And this is their honesty.

By this time you may see, if you are not wilfully blind, that the way of godliness is the only honest way; and therefore you must either be godly or dishonest; and pretend not any longer that you are honest while you are ungodly; unless you will increase your shame by your contradictions. The Scripture description of one that is honest is, that "in simplicity and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, he hath his conversation in the world;" 2 Cor. i. 22. The honesty which the Gospel teacheth, and which God will own is this, "That denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ;" Tit. ii. 12, 13. "A godly seed" is opposed to the fruit of adultery; Mal. ii. 15. And when David lamenteth the decay of honesty in the world, his language tells you whom he took for honest men, Psal. xii. 1. "Help Lord, for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men;" and ver. 8. you may perceive what he thinks of others: "The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted." To "serve God with reverence and godly fears" is the true honesty; Heb. xii. 28. And now choose you whether you will be honest or ungodly; but be sure that it is the godly that are esteemed honest, and accepted by the Lord; and however the world judgeth, "Know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself," as he tells you, Psal. iv. 3.

CHAPTER VIII.

Holiness is the most Gainful way.

WE have certainly found out already the SAFEST way, and the MOST HONEST way. We are next to inquire which way is most profitable. And one would think that this should be as easily resolved as the rest. I am sure if God be wiser than man, and his holy word to be believed, the question is decided, and beyond dispute. Saith Paul, 1 Tim. vi. 5, 6. "Men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, suppose that gain is godliness," or that it is better than godliness, and therefore their godliness to be suited to their worldly gain. "But (it is) godliness with contentment which is the great gain." Yea, "godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come;" 1 Tim. iv. 8.

But to what end should I cite more words of Scripture, for a point which all the Scripture moveth? It is not possible that any man can be unresolved in this, that understandeth and believeth the word of God. But yet because I see that commodity is so much looked after in the world, and almost all are for the gainful way, as they apprehend it, and therefore it is plain that godliness is not practically believed to be the most gainful way (or else men would follow it as eagerly as they do their worldly gain). I shall therefore open to you somewhat of that gain that godliness doth bring; and if you can say that any other course will prove as gainful, and make it good, then take that course. But if you cannot, consider what you have to do; and do not refuse your own commodity.

1. The first part of our gain, which is the sum of all the rest, is God himself who is become our God, through Jesus Christ. He is in covenant with all the saints (Psal. l. 5.), and this is the covenant, "I will be your God, and you shall be my people;" Jer. vii. 23. Ezek. xxxvi. 28. Jer. xi. 4. xxx. 22. Lev. xxvi. 45. Ezek. xi. 20. xxxvii. 23. 27. 2 Cor. vi. 16. He is a God to others, as a king is a king to traitors, whom he will condemn. But he is a God to his people, as a king is related to his faithful subjects, and a father to his dearest child. When he calleth himself 'our Father,' he

speakeeth so much of his children's happiness, as is their admiration as well as their joy. But when he calleth himself our God, he speaks as much as can be spoken.

To be 'our God' is to be 'the Infinite, Power, Wisdom, and Goodness engaged to us for our good, and to be ours according to our necessity and capacity.'

This, O ye worldlings, is the riches of the saints! This is the wealth that we will boldly boast. Boast you of your houses, and lands, and money, and we will boast of our God. Have you houses, and towns, and countries at command? Be it so; but the saints have the God of the world to be their God. Have you kingdoms and dominions? We have the God of all the earth; the King of kings, and Lord of lords. Set all your riches in the balance against him, and try what they will prove. Set all the world, and the kingdoms, and the glory, and the wealth of it in the balance, and try whether they are any more to God, than one dust or feather to all the world; yea, they are "nothing, and less than nothing; vanity, and lighter than vanity itself;" Isa. xl. 16, 17. This one jewel containeth all our treasure. He is ours that hath all things. "What then can we need?" Psal. xxiii. 1. He is ours that knoweth all things. Who then can overreach us, or undo us by deceit? He is ours that can do all things. What then should we fear? and what power shall prevail against us? He is ours that is goodness and love itself. How then can we be miserable? or what imperfection can there be in our felicity? "They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches, none of them can by any means redeem his brother (nor himself) that he should live for ever, and not see corruption;" Psal. xlix. 6, 7, 9. "But God will redeem us from the power of the grave; for he shall receive us;" ver. 15. "Let the workers of iniquity boast themselves awhile;" Psal. xciv. 4. "Let the wicked boast of their heart's desire, and bless the covetous whom the Lord abhorreth;" Psal. x. 3. "It is the Lord that is king for ever and ever; that heareth the desires of the humble; that prepareth our hearts, and preparereth his ear to hear;" ver. 16, 17. "Our souls shall make their boast in God;" Psal. xxxiv. 2. "O taste and see that the Lord is good! blessed is the man that trusteth in him." But you cannot say truly, Blessed is the man that hath lands and lordships; blessed is the man that hath crowns and king-

doms. Yea, truly you may say, "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and withdraweth his heart from the Lord;" Jer. xvii. 5. "Fear the Lord ye his saints, for there is no want to them that fear him;" Psal. xxxiv. 8—10. But when you have all the world, you cannot say that you have no want. "Confounded then be the covetous idolaters, that boast themselves of their idols;" Psal. xcvi. 7. "But in God will we boast all the day long, and praise his name for evermore;" Psal. xli. 8. What have you but the gleanings of our harvest, and the crumbs that fall from the children's table? Our God is he that giveth you your prosperity. He droppeth you these leavings, from the redundancy of his goodness, when he hath given himself, his Son, and all things to his own. All that we want, and all that our souls desire, is in God. "We have none in heaven but him, nor any in earth that we desire besides him;" Psal. lxxiii. 25. "His lovingkindness is better to us than life;" Psal. lxxiii. 3. "Our flesh and our heart faileth us (and all the creatures fail us), but God is the strength of our hearts and our portion for ever;" Psal. lxxiii. 26. Verily, the riches of all the princes of the earth is less in comparison of him that is the treasure and portion of the saints, than a straw is to all the earth, or a little dirt to the shining sun.

2. Would you yet hear more of the riches of believers (though more than God there cannot be). "The Lord Jesus Christ is their Head and Husband; their Saviour and Intercessor at God's right hand." They are married to him. His merits are theirs for all those uses to which they need them. "It is he that justifieth. Who then shall condemn them? He that spared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Rom. viii. 32. 34. "Christ is the pearl of infinite value," for whom we have willingly sold all; Matt. xiii. 45, 46. And what are all your treasures to this treasure? Ask Paul, and he will tell you, that had tried both. "His gain he counteth loss for Christ; yea, all things he accounted but loss and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ;" Phil. iii. 7, 8. It is love incomprehensible, surpassing knowledge, that is revealed to us in Christ;" Eph. iii. 18, 19. "The riches of Christ are unsearchable riches;" ver. 8. It is Christ that bindeth up our broken hearts; that is the Peace-maker and Reconciler of our souls to God. What he

hath done for us and what he will do, I shall tell you anon. But the ungodly have no part in him, nor have they any such treasure, that will do for them what Christ will do for us. Their treasure is the wrath of God, which they are "heaping up against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;" Rom. ii. 5. "All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in Christ;" Col. ii. 3. And he hath them for us, according to our measure, as being our Treasury, our Head, and made of God to "us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption;" 1 Cor. i. 30. They are "exceeding riches of grace" that are shewed in the kindness of God through Jesus Christ, to all that are sanctified by that grace; Ephes. ii. 6—8. Yea, that you may see there is no comparison, even that which you abhor in a Christian's case, and account his misery and the worst of Christ, is better than the best of your condition, and than that for which you lose your souls. For the "very reproach of Christ is greater riches than the treasures of the world;" Heb. xi. 26. And it is the reproach that we undergo for Christ, that you most abhor, and the treasures of the world that you most highly esteem. It is greater riches to be one of them that are scorned and derided for the sake of Christ, than to be one of them that hath the wealth of the world at his dispose. And if the reproach of Christ be greater riches than all yours, what then is his life, and love, and benefits? his grace and glory?

3. Would you have the riches of the saints yet further opened to you? Why, the Holy Ghost is in covenant with them as their sanctifier and comforter. And he is not only theirs himself, by covenant and relation, but he also dwelleth in them by his graces, and restoreth the image of God upon them. They are the "temples of the Holy Ghost, which is in them;" 1 Cor. vi. 19. And by the Spirit, and by faith, Christ dwelleth in their hearts; Ephes. iii. 17. Rom. viii. 11. 1 Cor. iii. 16. God himself doth dwell in them, and converse with them, and write his law in their hearts, and teach them himself by this his Spirit; 2 Cor. vi. 16. Heb. i. 10. x. 16. "Hereby we know that he dwelleth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us;" 1 John iii. 14. Yea, "he that is joined to the Lord, is one spirit;" 1 Cor. vi. 17. For "the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty;" 2 Cor. iii. 17. "We are an habitation of

God through the Spirit ;” Ephes. ii. 22. “ Because we are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, whereby we cry, Abba, Father ;” Gal. iv. 6. By this Spirit the saints have “ access unto the Father ;” Ephes. ii. 18. and by this it is, that they are quickened to prayer and holy worship, and their infirmities are helped ; chap. vi. 18. Rom. viii. 11. 26. By this they “ fight against the flesh, and overcome it ;” Gal. v. 17, 18. Rom. viii. 13. In this they “ live, and walk, and work ;” Rom. viii. 1. 5. Gal. v. 16. 25. This Spirit is the “ testimony of their adoption” (Rom. viii. 16.), and the “ seal and earnest of their heavenly inheritance ;” 2 Cor. i. 22. v. 5. Ephes. iv. 30. By this they “ are new born ;” John iii. 5, 6. “ And put off the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and being renewed in the spirit of their minds, do put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness ;” Ephes. iv. 22—24. By the illumination of this Spirit, they have a new understanding, and are brought “ out of darkness into the marvellous light of Christ” (1 Pet. ii. 9.), that they “ may know what is the hope of the Christian vocation, and what is the riches of the glory of Christ’s inheritance in the saints ;” Ephes. i. 18. In a word, by this Spirit their sins are mortified, their souls renewed, and made like to God, and they “ become a holy priesthood, a peculiar people unto Christ, and in this Spirit have communion with him ;” Rom. viii. 13. Tit. iii. 5. 1 Pet. ii. 9. Tit. ii. 14. 2 Cor. xiii. 14. And what is all the riches of this world, to this heavenly treasure, the Spirit of the Lord ? They that have this Spirit, are taught by it to set light by all your riches, and to esteem one day’s communion with Christ above all the gold and glory of this world. And that which sets the soul of man so far above riches, is better than those riches. As your lands and honours do set you above the pins and points that children take for their treasure, and set as much by as you do by yours ; so the Spirit of Christ and the life of faith, doth set the souls of true believers a thousandfold more above your riches, than you are above your children’s toys.

If yet you see not the riches of saints consider but the wonderful expression, 2 Pet. i. 4. That they “ have exceeding great and precious promises given them, that by these they may be partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And can

there be more on earth bestowed on man, than to be made partakers of the Divine nature? As it would be a greater gift to a brute, to be made a man, and have manly riches, than to have a store of provender suited to his brutishness; so is it greater riches to the ungodly to be sanctified and made partakers of that nature that is called Divine by God himself, than to have provision for unmortified lusts, and to have all the contentments of a fleshly mind. It were a greater gift to an idiot, to be made a wise and learned man, than to be furnished with feathers or sticks to play with. So is it here.

4. Every truly sanctified man, is restored from the misery that he was brought into by sin. He hath all his sins forgiven him, and is freed from the curse of the law, by the merits of Christ, and the promise of the Gospel. "For in him we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins;" Col. i. 14. "And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses;" Acts xiii. 39. "When we were dead in our sins, we were quickened with Christ, and had all our trespasses forgiven us;" Col. ii. 13. Ask a wounded conscience that groaneth under the weight of sin, and under the sense of God's indignation, whether forgiveness of sin be a treasure or not? I am sure they that now are past forgiveness, and feel what sin is in the bitter fruits, would give ten thousand worlds, if they had them, for the pardon of their sins: and would account forgiveness a greater mercy than all the riches and kingdoms of the world. What a heavy curse did the Spirit of God pass upon Simon Magus, for thinking that money was a valuable thing to purchase the Holy Ghost with! "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased by money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness," &c. Acts viii. 20, 21. The name of Simon Magus is odious to us all; and yet I doubt that most among us exceed him in the sin for which he is thus cursed. For he thought the gift of the Holy Ghost to be better than his money, or else he would not have offered his money for it. But most men take their money to be better than the gift of the Holy Ghost. If he that would have purchased the Holy Ghost, yea a lower and less necessary gift of the Spirit, was pronounced wicked, and cursed with such a

heavy curse, what are they that set more by their money than by the special gift of the Holy Ghost, yea that hate and deride it, and plead against its sanctifying work? The time is near when your riches will fail you, and your prosperity die, and your sins will live; and then there is none of you all but will say that pardon and grace are greater riches than all the world.

5. Moreover, the ungodly have angels to attend them and be their guard, as I have proved to you before. And are horses, and kine, and oxen, think you, greater riches than the guard and ministration of the angels of God? Heb. i. 14. Psal. xci. 11, 12.

6. And surely the very communion of saints and ordinances of God which in the church we here enjoy, are greater riches than all the world. We are now "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens of the saints, and of the household of God;" Ephes. ii. 19. We are members of that well tempered body, where all the members are obliged and disposed to have the "same care one for another," that if "one suffer all suffer, and if one be honoured all rejoice;" 1 Cor. xii. 25, 26. As weak as Christians are, and as worthless in your eyes, one of their hearty spiritual prayers, and one word of their holy savoury conference, doth profit us more than all your treasures will ever profit you. While the Divine nature is in them, somewhat divine will proceed from their mouths, and be seen in their lives, which is worth more than all the riches of the world. And O how fruitful are the holy ordinances which we partake of, both in the church's communion, and alone in our retirements! A poor Christian can get more in a sermon which you sleep under, or deride, than you will get by your trades or livings while you live. He findeth greater treasures in one chapter of the Bible, or in one good book, than you can get out of all your lands or labour. The best of your livings will not yield you so much commodity in seven years, nor in seven thousand years, if you could so long keep them, as a believing soul can get from God in one hour's prayer, even in secret, where he is not by man observed. You do not believe this, that are ungodly. I know you do not heartily believe it; for else you would try it, and not continue in your ungodliness. But they that try it, know it to be true, or else what makes them

continue in it, and live upon their holy communion with God and his servants, more resolvedly than you do on your lands and labours? Somewhat you may conjecture they find in holy duty, that makes them so instant in it as they are.

7. Another part of our commodity by holiness, is the promise and assurance of the love of God and of our salvation; and the peace of conscience that followeth hereupon. All true believers have objective certainty; that is, the thing is certain in itself, whether they perceive it or not. And they may have subjective or actual certainty in themselves if they do their parts. And is not a certain title to a lordship or a kingdom greater treasure than the possession of a straw? Much more is God's promise of everlasting glory a greater treasure than all your wealth. As heaven is infinitely better than earth, so the promise of God is the best security. Though we be not with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and do not yet see the face of God, yet have we a promise that speedily we shall be there, and shall see that which they see, and enjoy all that which they enjoy. The poorest Christian hath all that in promise under the hand of God himself, which angels and glorified saints have in possession. They can shew you a better title to heaven, though they are unworthy in themselves, than any of you can shew to your lands or houses, in your deeds or leases. As poor and simple as that godly man is whom you despise, he is an "heir of heaven, and a fellow heir with Christ;" Rom. viii. 17. Gal. iii. 29. Heb. i. 14. xi. 9. When we had "the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and were justified by grace, we were made the heirs of eternal life, according to the hope" that is given us by the Gospel; Tit. iii. 5. 7. And God that hath given them those "better things that accompany salvation, is not unrighteous to forget their work and labour of love, if they do but shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end, and be not slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises;" Heb. vi. 9—12. "For this cause was Christ the Mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first testament, they which are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance;" Heb. ix. 15. And "we know that he is faithful that hath promised." And if your bills, and bonds, and deeds, and leases, be part of your riches, we shall much

more take the promise of God for our everlasting happiness in heaven, to be far greater riches.

8. And yet we may put this among our riches, or at least as the overplus given us by God, that we have better advantage even for the matters of this world, than the ungodly have. For we have a promise that we shall lack nothing that is good for us; Psal.xxiv. 10. And so have not they. We have warrant to cast all our care on God, who by promise is engaged to care for us; 1 Pet.v. 7. We are commanded to be (anxiously) "careful for nothing, but in all things make known our requests to God," as little children that care not for themselves, but go to their father for what they want; Phil. iv.6. It is enough for us whatever we want, that "our heavenly Father knoweth that we want it;" Matt. vi. 32. Who hath charged us to disburden our minds of these vexatious cares, and to "seek first his kingdom, and the righteousness thereof," and promised us that "other things shall be added to us;" Matt. vi.33. We have also a promise that "all things shall work together for our good;" Rom.viii. 28. And therefore we shall have more from things of this life, than the ungodly have. Yea, more by the want of them than they by the possession. For if they do us good in our graces and communion with God, and in the matter of our salvation, they help us to that which is of far higher value than themselves. Poverty to a true believer, is better than riches to the ungodly that destroyeth himself by them, when the believer is helped by his poverty. Imprisonment to Paul and Silas, was better than liberty to their persecutors. And thus in the fruits and saving benefits, "all things are ours;" 1 Cor.iii. 22. We have the love of God with what we possess, be it more or less, when the wicked have his wrath with it. And who would have their riches on such terms?

9. Another part of the gain of godliness is, that it puts us into a readiness to die, and a fitness to appear before the Lord. Though all the godly have not so great a readiness as to desire to be presently dissolved, yet all of them are in a safe condition, and are so far ready, that death shall pass them into a blessed state. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. And in this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven. And

God that hath given us the earnest of his Spirit, hath wrought in us, to be always confident (or at least give us cause), knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. (For we walk by faith, and not by sight.) We are confident I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord ;” 2 Cor. v. 1, 2, 8, 9. Though the abode of the godly in the flesh is usually more needful to those about them, yet to themselves their death is gain, and therefore they have cause to “ desire to depart, and be with Christ, as being far better ;” Phil. i. 21, 23, 24. For sin, which is the sting of death, is mortified, and the curse of the law, which is the strength of it, is relaxed or nullified to us by the Gospel ; so that the believer may triumph and say, “ O death where is thy sting ? O grave where is thy victory ?” (1 Cor. xv. 55, 56.) and “ to give thanks to God that giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ ;” ver. 57. Verily I would not exchange my part (though alas too small or dark a part) in this one privilege of true believers, for all the wealth and dominions on earth. O the face of death will soon make the glory of all your greatness to vanish, and the beauty of your flourishing estates to wither ; and all that you now glory in to appear as nothing. And then how glad would you be to change portions with the holy servants of the Lord, whom you now despise ! When once you hear, “ Thou fool, this night shall they require thy soul ! and whose then are all those things that thou hast provided ?” (Luke xii. 20.) then in a moment you will change your minds, and cry out of the world as nothing worth, and wish you had busied your hands in laying up a better treasure. This is one difference, O ungodly wretch, between a holy servant of God and thee ! Death cannot undo him, but it will undo thee. It cannot take his riches from him ; for his God, his Christ, his holiness, the promises are his riches ; but it will separate thee and thy wealth for ever. It will put an end to all his troubles, and fears, and griefs ; and it will put an end to all thy prosperity, and to all thy mirth, and hope for ever. A godly man dare die : or if he ignorantly fear it, yet shall it be the end of all his fears ; but thou darest not die, and yet thou must ; or if thou ignorantly hope of a happiness after it, yet will it nevertheless end all thy hopes. O what a mercy it is to be ready to die !

10. But the great unspeakable riches of the saints is in

the life to come. We have here the hope and the foretaste ; but it is only there that we shall have our portion. You see what a poor Christian is according to his outward appearance. But you see not what he will be to eternity. There is the kingdom for which we hope, and for which we run, and wait, and suffer. If God be true, and his Gospel true, then heaven shall be the portion of the sanctified. But if it were otherwise, then we would confess their hopes are vain. Heaven is our riches, or we have none. There have we laid up all our hopes ; and in these hopes we will live and die, as knowing they will not make us ashamed ; Rom. v. 5. ix. 33. 1 John ii. 28. We believe that we shall live with Christ in glory, “ shine as stars in the firmament of our Father, and be “ made like to the angels of God,” and shall see his face, and praise his name, and live in his everlasting love and joy ; for all this he himself hath promised us ; 1 Thess. iv. 17, 18. Dan. xii. 3. Matt. xiii. 43. Luke xx. 36. Rev. xxii. 4. Matt. xxv. 21.

And now, poor worldling, what is all your gain and riches in comparison of the least of these ? Do you think in your judgments that there is any comparison ? Or rather doth not sin and the world even brutify you, and make you lay by the use of your reason, and live as if you knew not what you know ? Your treasure is all visible, when ours is unseen, and therefore I may bid you bring it forth, and let us see it, whether indeed it be better than the treasure of the saints. Let us see what that is that is better than God, and everlasting glory. What ! is a little fleshly ease or mirth ; a little meat, and drink, and pleasure ; a little more money, or space of ground to use than your neighbours have ; are these the things that you will change for heaven, and prefer before the Lord that made you ? O poor miserable sinners ! Are you not told that you have your good things here ? But what will you have hereafter when this is gone ? Luke xvi. 25. When your wealth is gone, and your mirth is gone, your souls are immortal, and therefore your misery and horror will continue, and never be gone. As the wealth of the godly is within them, and above the reach of their enemies, and surer than yours, so is it the more durable, even everlasting. When all your riches are upon the wing, even ready to be gone, and leave you in sorrow, when you are most highly valuing them, you have it now, but it is gone to-morrow.

“ And what is the hope of the hypocrite though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul ? Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him ? ” Job xxvii. 8, 9. Let the words of Christ decide the controversy, if indeed you take him for your Judge. “ If any man will come after me let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his works ; ” Matt. xvi. 24—27.

Well, sirs, you that are all for getting, and for wealth, judge now if you have not lost your reason, whether a holy or unholy, a heavenly or an earthly life be the more profitable way ! I would not draw you to any thing that you should lose by. If I speak not for your gain, reject my words as contemptuously as you please. But if I do, then be not against your own commodity. Will such silly gain as the world affords you, do so much with you as it doth ; and shall not the heavenly inheritance do more ? Shall all this stir be made in the world for that which you are ready to leave behind you, and will you not lay up a treasure in heaven where rust and moths corrupt not, and where you may live for ever ? Matt. vi. 20. What profit now have all those millions of souls that are gone from earth, by all the wealth they here possessed ? Hear, sinners, and bethink you in the name of God. You are leaving earth and stepping into eternity, and where then should you lay up your riches ? Would you rather have your portion where you must stay but a few days, than where you must dwell for ever ? O “ Labour not for the meat that perisheth,” in comparison of “ that which endureth to everlasting life, which Christ will give you,” if you will follow him ; John vi. 27. Make you friends of this wealth that the world abuseth to “ unrighteousness, that when all fails below, you may be received into the everlasting habitations ; ” Luke xvi. 9. Make not yourselves a treasure of corruptible riches, and set not your hearts on “ gold and silver, lest the rust of it be a witness against you, and eat your flesh as it were fire ; and lest ye heap up ” another kind of treasure than you dream of against the last days. How many of you have

cause to weep and howl for your approaching miseries, even then when you are glorying in your prosperity? James v. 1—5. Are you for commodity? Refuse not then the best commodity. Be not enemies to them, or to those holy motions, that make for your everlasting profit. Take but the most gainful course for yourselves, and we are pleased. If you know any thing better than God and glory, and any riches that will endure any longer than eternity, why do you not shew it us, that we may join with you? But if you do not, why will you not hearken to the servants of the Lord, and join with them? “Wherefore, saith the Lord, do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, come unto me, hear and your souls shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you;” Isa. lv. 2, 3. If there be not more to be gotten by Christ, and by prayer, and by the promises, and a holy life, than there is by sin, or than there is by all your friends, or lands, or trades, or care, or labour here, then take your course, and turn your back on God, and spare not. But if you are ashamed to say so, be ashamed to think so, or to live so.

Verily sirs, if the Gospel be true, you must be every man of you saints, or miserable. Holiness is the only thriving way. Yea, the only saving way. If you forsake this way, you are losing while you are gaining, and losing by your gains. You are but making Achan's bargain, that by his gold did purchase a storm of stones that dashed out his brains; Josh. vii. You are running after Gehazi's gains, that thought he had got riches, and it proved a leprosy. You are trading with the devil, though you see him not, and will not believe it, even as certainly as the miserable witches, that sell him their souls for a few fair promises, and when they have done have the most miserable life of any. You are laying up but Judas's treasures, which quickly grew too hot to hold, and too heavy for his conscience to bear; and he would fain have rid his hands of it if he knew how; and because he cannot he hangs himself, and rids himself out of the ashes into the flames. O covet not such undoing gains, which you all know as sure as you breathe, that you must let go. Believe but your Redeemer and you shall know that there

are greater and better things before you. Gather not stones when you may be gathering pearls. Hear me, poor sinner ! If God and heaven, if grace and glory seem not better riches than this world, thou judgest thyself to have no part in them.

CHAPTER IX.

Holiness is the most Honourable way.

WE are resolved, if Scripture and reason can resolve us, that godliness is the safest, the most honest, and the most gainful course. I shall next shew you that it is the most honourable course. I know the world thinks otherwise of it. In most places it is a matter of reproach to be but serious and diligent in God's service. And though in this place, and at this time, through the great mercy of God, it is not so with us, unless it be with here and there a sottish drunkard, yet there are too few places that are so much freed from this plague. And it is not yet I fear forgotten of God, since the very practice of a godly life, was a matter of greater scorn and derision, than to have been the profanest swearer or drunkard. If a man would not have gone to the alehouse with them, nor sworn, or spoke profanely as they did ; and if he made any serious mention of the Scripture, or the life to come ; if he reproved any gross offender, if he prayed and instructed his family, and spent the Lord's day in holy exercises, this was enough to brand him with the name of Puritan or Precisian, and make him the common byword of the town, and (let him be never so conformable to bishops and ceremonies) if once he went under the name of Puritan, he was looked upon as Lot in Sodom, by the open enemies of piety, who insulted over them, and lived securely in open wickedness. This is the chiefest sin that God hath been scourging this nation for, if I am able to understand his judgments. I know men are apt to interpret providences according to their own interests and conceits. But I take the help of the Scripture, and the experience of former ages for my interpretation ; and I am verily persuaded (not excluding other sins) that the great sin

for which God hath plagued England by a sharp and bloody war, was the common scorn that was cast upon his service, it being made the derision of too many in the land. I never came into any place, where mere serious diligence for salvation was not branded with the name of Puritanism and too much preciseness; and those that abstained from iniquity were as owls among their neighbours, even the very wonder and the reproach of those about them. When this is made a principle that all must hold that ever hope to be accepted with the Lord, in (Heb. xi. 6.) that "he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." This is the next point in our faith, to the believing that there is a God. And yet among us that called ourselves Christians, the diligent seeking of the Lord was so far from being thus esteemed of, that it was the surest way to make a man contemptible and odious unto many. The jealous God did long endure this horrible indignity, but would not still endure it from us. Must he make a holy law for the government of the world, and shall the obeying of it be derided? Is he our sovereign Lord, having by creation and redemption the right of ruling us, and shall we scorn them that will be ruled by him? Those that will not have Christ rule over them, will surely be destroyed; Luke xix. 27. And shall those escape that scorn his service? Holiness is the image of God, and unholiness the devil's image. And when the image of God is made a scorn, and the devil's image had in honour, and that by them that call themselves Christians, was it not time for God to arise to judgment? Was it not enough that God was slighted by them, and his service turned out of doors, but it must be made a byword? Is there but one way pleasing unto God, and but one way that leadeth to salvation, and must that one way be the common scorn? For these things God had a controversy with this land; and he hath pleaded his cause with fire and sword, and spoke by a voice that will not be derided. He hath entered into judgment with priests and people. He will not always support and maintain a people to deride him. O England! hadst thou none to make the football of thy scorn, but the servants of the most high God? Did he not tell thee that they were his jewels? Mal. iii. 1. And that "he that touched them did touch the apple of his eye?" Zech. ii. 8. Will he give his Son for them, and will he glorify them with himself, and make them equal to the angels? Luke xx.

36. And didst thou think he would give thee leave to make them the scorn and offscouring of the world? Hadst thou none to make the football of thy contemptuous sport, but the sons of God, the spouse of Christ, yea his members, and the heirs of heaven? O foolish nation, hadst thou none to deride and make thy byword but Christ himself? Yea, it was Christ himself, though thou wilt not believe it! "Inasmuch as thou didst it to one of the least of these his brethren, thou didst it unto him;" Matt. xxv. 40. "In all their afflictions he was afflicted" (Isa. lxiii. 9.); and therefore in all "their reproaches he was reproached." All those that were derided for holiness, were derided upon Christ's account. If holiness be vile and to be scorned, then God himself is vile and to be scorned, and consequently is no God; and what greater blasphemy could be uttered by the tongue of man? For God is holiness itself. In us it is but a beam, from him the shining glorious Sun. If a little in us imperfect worms be hated by thee, how wouldst thou hate the perfect holiness of God? And if we deserve thy scorn for our obedience (alas, our too imperfect obedience), it must fall upon him that made the law, and gave us these commands. If he be too precise that imperfectly obeyeth God, what will you say of God himself that commandeth more than any of us all performeth, and that chargeth us on pain of damnation to obey him? O how much more wisely would you do, if you daily studied, and diligently obeyed those laws yourselves! If the rulers of the earth would remember him that is the King of kings, and did serve the Lord with fear, and rejoiced before him with trembling, and kissed the Son to prevent his anger, and their perishing in the way! Psal. ii. 11, 12. O England! had thy disobedient inhabitants never heard, how vain their rage and imaginations would be, when they "set themselves and took counsel against the Lord and his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us?" Did they never hear that the deriders were derided by him that sitteth in the heavens, and how he will shortly speak to them in wrath, that speak against his ways in malice, and will vex them in his sore displeasure, that vexed his servants for the doing of his pleasure! Will they not believe, till hell have taught them that in despite of all his enemies, he will set his Son the King of saints upon his holy hill of Sion? Psal. ii. 1—9. Had they

never heard how hard at last it will prove for them to kick against the pricks? Acts ix. 5. And will they not know by any other means but feeling, that he will destroy those as his enemies that "would not have him to reign over them?" (Luke xix. 27.) and that he will "break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel?" Psal. ii. 9. O scorers! did you never read his words, 1 Sam. ii. 30. "Them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed?" Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish! for this word shall be fulfilled upon you, and the work be wrought which you would not believe when God foretold it, and will not yet understand and believe though it be declared to you; Acts xiii. 41. Think not that the infirmities of the godly do justify your contempt of godliness. Think not that a Judas in Christ's family will justify you for making a scorn of his family, and persecuting his disciples! or that a Ham in the ark, or the sin of Noah will warrant you to make them as bad as the destroyed world for whom God had done so much to save! Think not when you have jeered at a holy life, that God will take it for a good excuse, to tell him that you had found a fault in his servants, or a hypocrite crept into his church. He hateth their faults much more than you; but will you therefore hate their goodness? Condemn the breaches of his laws and spare not; but will you therefore condemn the keeping of them? O England! if thou hadst had the grace or wit to use Christ better in his ways and servants, he would have used thee better, and dealt more gently with thy inhabitants, and thy flames and calamities might have been prevented. Often wast thou told from 2 Chron. xxxvi. 14. what it was that captivated Israel and made their priests and people to be the heathens' slaves. "When the Lord God sent unto them by his prophets, because he had compassion on his people and his dwelling-place, they mocked the messengers of God and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy." But alas, thou hast gone much further than this. Israel mocked the prophets; but I remember not that it is ever said of them, that the way of godliness itself was made a common scorn among them; but still they gloried in the Lord and in the law, and in the temple, and the holy worship. But here, if a man did but talk of heaven, or of any holy subject, or re-

prove a swearer, or not join with them in their impieties, the common cry was, ‘ This is one of the holy brethren : here is one of the saints : it will never be well till we are rid of these Puritans and Precisians.’ How often have I heard almost the same words from Englishmen, as Lot did from the Sodomites, “ This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge (Gen. xix. 9.); when they lived “ in their lasciviousness, lusts, excess of drink, revellings, banquettings, and abominable profanation of holy things, they thought it strange that we ran not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of us,” but forgetting the account that their Judge was ready to require of them ; 1 Pet. iv. 3—5.

Well ! have you yet taken warning by the judgments of the Lord ? God hath begun to take away the reproach of holiness, and through his great mercy to us it is more honourable in England than formerly it hath been. Is it honoured by you ? Or are you hardened to perdition ? Fearful is the case of him, whoever he be, that after all the gentle and terrible warnings of the Lord, dare think or speak reproachfully of a holy life ! Yet hear the calls of the Eternal Wisdom ; “ How long ye simple ones will ye love simplicity, and the scorers delight in scorning ; and fools hate knowledge ? Turn you at my reproof ;” Prov. i. 20—22, &c. But mercies and judgments are lost on the hard-hearted. “ Let favour be shown to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness : in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord. When the hand of the Lord is lifted up, they will not see ; but they shall see and be ashamed for their envy at his people, and the enemies’ own fire shall devour them ;” Isa. xxvi. 10, 11. And then as they “ set at naught his counsel, and would none of his reproof,” but mocked them that feared God ; so will he also “ laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh. For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord.” Prov. i. 25—27. 29.

I will add but this one word of terror. To scorn at holiness is to scorn at the Holy Ghost, whose office or work it is to sanctify us. As the Father hath commanded us to be holy as he is holy (1 Pet. i. 16.) ; and made it his image on us ; and as the Son hath come to destroy unholiness (1 John iii. 8.), and give us an example of perfect holiness, and sanc-

tify to himself a peculiar people (Titus ii. 14.); so is it the undertaken work of the Holy Ghost, as sent therefore from the Father and the Son, to make holy all that God will save. And though I say not that it is the unpardonable blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, to scorn his very work and office, yet I say it is a blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, so near that which is unpardonable, that the thoughts of it should humble all that have been guilty, and make men fear so horrible a sin. But “blessed is he that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night.” “The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked, but he blesseth the habitation of the just. Surely he scorneth the scorners, but he giveth grace unto the lowly;” Prov. iii. 33, 34. These are the true sayings of the Lord.

I thought not meet to pass by this necessary reproof of the contempt of holiness, which this land hath been so guilty of, and which hath undone so many souls, and made such desolations in the land. And now you shall see that I am able to make good the grounds of this reproof, and that holiness is no dishonourable thing.

1. The holy servants of the Lord have the most honourable master in all the world. This only is sufficient to weigh down all the honours of the world, if it were ten thousand worlds. When the builders of the temple were asked their names by the officers of king Darius (Ezra v. 10, 11.), their answer was, “We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth.” No king on earth, no angel in heaven hath a more honourable master. To be the highest officer of the greatest prince, is a title as much more base than this, as a man is baser than the Infinite God. If God cannot put sufficient honour on those that are related to him, tell us who can? When Moses went to Pharaoh for the Israelites’ deliverance, he was to speak in the name of the Lord; and when Pharaoh spake contemptuously of the Lord, as one that he knew not and would not obey, how wondrously doth God vindicate his honour and his people! Let men be called knights and lords, and kings, and emperors; may I but be truly called the servant of the God of heaven, I shall not envy them their honours! Our relation to so glorious a majesty doth put an inexpressible honour upon the

poorest person and the lowest works. A servant of the Lord is more honourable in rags, in a smoky cottage, or the meanest state, than the Emperors of Constantinople or Tartary are in all their wealth and worldly glory. And if you think not so yourselves, why do you so much honour them when they are dead? What was Peter and Paul, and the rest of the apostles, but poor despised men in the world, that travelled about to preach the Gospel? and what was their honour but to be the holy servants of the Lord? Yet now they are dead, you are desirous to keep holydays in an honourable memorial of them, and kings and princes reverence their names. What were the martyrs whose memories are now so honourable with us, but a company of hated, persecuted men, that were used by others as butchers do their beasts, and worse? But because they were the servants of the Lord, and suffered for his truth and cause, their names are honourable, and the names of their greatest persecutors do even stink. It is said of Constantine the Great, (who was himself greater by his holiness than his victories,) that he was wont to reverence the bishops that had been sufferers for Christ, and kissed the place where the eye abode that one of them had lost for the Gospel's sake. The Christian princes that ruled the world, were wont to honour the poorest, mortified, retired servants of Christ, that had cast off the world, as perceiving that he is more honourable that contemneth it, than he that enjoyeth it. The nearest to God undoubtedly are the most honourable.

2. Consider, that as it is God that the saints are thus related to, so their relation is so near, and their titles so exceeding high, which God himself had put upon them, that it advanceth them to the greatest height of honour that men on earth can reasonably expect. Yea, with holy admiration we must say it, so wonderful is the honour which the glorious God hath put upon his poor, unworthy servants, that they durst not have owned it, nor thought such titles meet for men, if God himself had not been the author of them! Nor could they have believed that God would so advance them, if he had not both revealed it, and given them faith to believe his revelation. As if it were not enough for us to be his servants, he calleth us his friends; "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command

you. Henceforth I call you not servants ; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth : but I have called you friends ; for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you ;" John xv. 13—15.

(1.) Abraham " was called the Friend of God ;" Jam. ii. 23.

(2.) And they are called the Lord's jewels ; Mal. iii. 17.

(3.) They are called his beloved, and dearly beloved ; Deut. xxxiii. 12. Psal. lx. 5. cxxvii. 2. Cant. ii. 16. vi. 3. vii. 10. Holy and beloved are inseparable. " Beloved of God, called to be saints ;" Rom. iv. 7. " The elect of God, holy and beloved ;" Col. iii. 12. They are the dearly beloved of his soul (Jer. xii. 7.); for they are " accepted in the beloved" (Eph. i. 6.); even in the " beloved Son in whom the Father is well pleased ;" Matt. iii. 17. xvii. 5.

(4.) They are called children, or adopted sons ; Gal. iv. 6. John i. 12. And he disdaineth not to be called their Father ; Heb. xii. 9. Matt. xxiii. 9. 2 Cor. vi. 18. " I will be a father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty ;" Mal. iii. 17. He will spare them, as a man spareth his son that serveth him.

(5.) They are called also the heirs of heaven ; Rom. viii. 17. A more honourable heritage than earth affords.

(6.) They are called " a peculiar people to the Lord" (Tit. ii. 14.); and his " peculiar treasure ;" Exod. xix. 5. Psal. cxxxv. 4.

(7.) They are called " kings and priests to God ;" Rev. i. 6. They are a " chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people ;" 1 Pet. ii. 9.

(8.) The sanctified are called the spouse of Christ ; Cant. iv. 8—13. Because of the similitude of the holy covenant which they make with Christ to a marriage covenant ; and because of the dearness of his love to them, and the nearness and sweetness of his communion with them. Matt. xxii. 2. 4. 9. The Lord is said to be married to them ; Jer. iii. 14. And their Maker calls himself their Husband ; Isa. liv. 5.

(9.) Yea more, they are called the members of Christ ; 1 Cor. vi. 15. xii. 12. They are the " body of Christ and members in particular ;" ver. 27. We are " members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones, loved and cherished by him, as a man doth his own flesh ;" Ephes. v. 25. 28—30. 32. They are kept by the Lord as the apple of his eye ;

Deut. xxxii. 10. And he that "toucheth them, toucheth the apple of his eye;" Zech ii. 8. What nearness! what dearness do those terms express!

(10.) Yea, they are said to be one with Christ; "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit;" 1 Cor. vi. 17. "That they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. — That they may be one, even as we are one; I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one;" John xvii. 21—23. Not that they are one in Godhead, or personality, or office with Christ, but most nearly conjoined as subjects to their prince, that make one body politic, and as a wife to a husband, and nearer than these can express, in that they have the communications of his Spirit.

Judge now by all these wonderful titles, whether any but an atheist or infidel can deny, that the godly are the most honourable people in the world? If it be not a contemptible thing to be the son of a king, how much less to be the sons of the Eternal King. Deny the honour of those that are so nearly related to him, and you deny the honour of himself, and consequently deny him to be God. Atheism is the beginning and end of all.

3. Moreover the servants of the Lord have the most honourable natures or dispositions in the world. And the honour that ariseth from a man's intrinsical disposition, is far greater than that which accrueth to him from his parentage, or wealth, or worldly greatness, or any such extrinsic accidents. Many a proud and worthless person doth boast of the nobility of their ancestors, and tell you what blood doth run in their veins; when they have debased souls, and nothing advanced them or their ancestors, but their riches or the pleasure of some prince; and they know that the beggars at their doors did come from Noah as well as they. The surgeon findeth no purer blood in their veins, than in the beggars; nor are their carcasses any more sweet or lovely; and therefore if their manners are worse, they are more base than honest beggars. It is the mind that beareth the true stamp of nobility. They are the noblest that have the noblest souls. All the silks and velvets in the world, will not make an ape as honourable as a man, nor an idiot as a wise man. Solomon in all his royalty was not clothed like

some of the flowers in the field (Matt. vi. 28, 29.); and yet he was more honourable than they. A corpse may be most sumptuously adorned; a crown may be set on the head of an image. Such as the mind is, such is the man. And that the souls of the sanctified are more nobly qualified than those of other men is easily demonstrated. For,

(1.) Christ dwelleth in them by faith, and by his Spirit; Eph. i. 17. ii. 22. We are the temples of the Holy Ghost; 1 Cor. vi. 19. The new nature of the saints hath no meaner an Author than the Lord himself. It is the Divine power that giveth us all things that pertain to life and godliness; 2 Pet. i. 3. As it is the honourable work of God the Father to be our Creator, and of God the Son to be our Redeemer; so is it the honourable work of God the Holy Ghost to be our Sanctifier. And therefore as it is a blaspheming of the Creator to vilify the creation; and a blaspheming of the Redeemer to vilify the redemption; so is it a blaspheming of the Sanctifier to vilify sanctification. Though I say not that it is the unpardonable blasphemy, yet a fearful blasphemy it is. O that those wretches knew their crime, that mock at the special work of the Holy Ghost!

(2.) The new creature is illuminated with a heavenly light, and cured of its former mortal blindness, and is "brought out of darkness into marvellous light;" (Eph. i. 18. Acts xxvi. 18. Col. i. 13. 1 Pet. ii. 9.); and is taught of God; John vi. 45. 1 Thess. iv. 9. 1 John ii. 27. And it is more honourable to see, than to be blind, and to live in the open light, than in a dungeon. And it is the highest matters in the world that the gracious soul is savingly acquainted with. It is more honourable to have the knowledge of the profoundest sciences, than of some low and poor employment. And it is more honourable to have the saving knowledge of God, and of the life to come, which the poorest sanctified person hath, than to have the most admired fleshly wisdom, or all the common learning in the world. What high, and excellent, and necessary things doth grace acquaint the Christian with! He knoweth him that is the cause of all things else, having himself no cause. He knoweth him that is knowledge itself, and that knoweth all things. He knoweth him that is eternal, that never began, and shall never end; that is greater than the world; that is more glorious than the sun; that can do all things

because he is Almighty ; and yet can do no evil, because he is most good and holy. He knoweth him that made the world and all things, and holdeth them in the hand of his omnipotency, and ruleth them by his wisdom, and doeth all things according to the good pleasure of his will. He knoweth him that is man's felicity, to know whom is eternal life. He knoweth the Redeemer, and the riches of his grace and promises. He knoweth the diseases of his own soul, and their danger and cure. He knoweth what end he hath to aim at, and the work that he was made and redeemed for to do ; the temptations which he must resist ; the enemies which he must conquer ; the duties which he must perform. He knoweth his Redeemer's laws and covenants ; what he commandeth, promiseth, and threateneth, and to whom. He knoweth what will be hereafter : and where he shall live when this life is ended ; and what he shall do ten thousand years hence, yea, unto all eternity. He knoweth what will become of all the godly and ungodly (that die such) in the world, and where they shall be for evermore. In a word, he knoweth whence he came, whither he is going, and which way he must go. He knoweth God as his Maker, Governor, and End. He knoweth that God that he must please, and how to please him, and how to be saved, and to live with God for ever. This is the honourable knowledge of the sanctified ; which no men have but they alone. The cunning politicians of the world have none of it (as such). The speculators of nature, the great mathematicians, the learned doctors, famous for their skill in languages, philosophy, and the theory of divinity, are oft without it. They have more of the words, and notions, and forms, and methods, than unlearned saints have ; but they want the thing that these are made for. They have the signs, and the godly have the thing signified. They have the body of theology, and the godly Christian hath the soul. The ungodly doctors have better skill to break the shell, but the godly Christian only knows how to eat the kernel. The learned may be better at the office of a cook, to dress the meat ; but only the godly do feed on it, and digest it. Knowledge is to be valued, (as all creatures are) according to its usefulness. As it is more honourable to know how to govern a kingdom, command an army or navy, or save men's lives, than to make a fiddle or a hobby-horse ; so it is ten thousandfold more

honourable, to know how to order our hearts and lives, and to walk with God, and obtain the everlasting glory, than to know how to get the riches, and pleasures, and vainglory of the present world.

(3.) The sanctified are made alive to God, when other men are dead to sin; Rom. vi. 11. 13. Eph. ii. 1. And the poorest man alive is more honourable than the carcase of an emperor. "A living dog is better than a dead lion;" Eccles. ix. 4.

(4.) The sanctified are cleansed from the filthiness of their sins, which are the most odious defilements in the world: and they are purified by the blood and spirit of Christ; 1 John i. 7. 9. Eph. v. 26. 2 Cor. vii. 1. The "word of Christ hath made them clean;" John xv. 3. Their hearts are "purified by faith;" Acts xv. 9. 1 Pet. i. 22. 1 John iii. 3. And therefore the most odious part of their dishonour is removed; "sin is a reproach to any people;" Prov. xiv. 34. Whatever it may seem before ungodly men, it is sin that is your shame before the Lord. And this reproach the godly are now cleansed from. Though it be a dishonour to them that they were ungodly once, it is their honour that now they are not such; and that they are clothed with the righteousness of Christ.

(5.) The holy nature of the saints disposeth their hearts, and inclineth their wills to the highest and most honourable things. As in their knowledge, so in their inclinations they are above the baseness of the world. The nature of man is not to feed as beasts, and horses, and dogs do: he is above their food; and above their converse and kind of life. That will not content him that contenteth them. And the new nature of a sanctified man, is above the delights and contents of the ungodly. His heart cannot endure to take up with that kind of life. To mind nothing but this world, and to have no pleasure but to the flesh, and live as an utter stranger to God, and not to feed on the heavenly delights, and riches of the Gospel, but live as if there were no such thing, this sensual life is below his inclination, as feeding on dross, or conversing only with swine or cattle, is below the nature of a man. The noble soul is that which is inclined to the most noble objects; even to God, and holiness, and everlasting life, and cannot endure the poor, and low, and sordid life of men, that have their portion here; Psal. xvii. 14. No-

thing that is corporeal, or transitory, yea nothing below God can satisfy a holy soul. It is this holy disposition that fits men for holy duties, and that is their fitness for eternal happiness. If angels were not more holy than devils, and godly men than the ungodly, heaven could not hold them, nor could they any more see or enjoy the Lord, than they that are cast into outer darkness. And therefore if you dare say that the holy are no more honourable than the unholy, you must say that the holy angels are no more honourable than the devil, which sure you will scarce be so desperate as to speak.

(6.) Holiness in the godly is the image of God, in which we were created, and according to which we are renewed by the Holy Ghost; Eph. iv. 24. Col. iii. 10. Gen. i. 27. And what can be spoken more honourable of a creature, than that he hath his Maker's image, unless as to the degree, that some have more of it than others? It is the honourable title of the Son himself, that he "is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person." This is above the honour of any, or of all the saints. But to have the image of God in wisdom, and holiness, as all have that are sanctified, is a wonderful dignity to be given to a creature, and so low and unworthy creatures as we are. His commands tell us what are the qualifications of his people. "As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy, in all manner of conversation. For it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy;" 1 Pet. i. 15, 16. And how high a command, and strait a rule is that given us by Christ, Matt. v. 48. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Well may it be called and exceeding righteousness, surpassing the Scribes and Pharisees, which all have that enter into the heavenly kingdom; ver. 20. There is nothing under heaven that is known to man so like to God, as a holy soul. Remember this the next time you reproach such. All you that are the serpent's seed, remember when you spit your venom against holiness that it is the image of God that your enmity is exercised against. O what a strange conjunction of malignity and hypocrisy appeareth in the enemies of God among us! A picture of Christ that is drawn by a painter, or a forbidden image of God that is carved by an image-maker in stone, that hath nothing but the name of an image of God, these they will reverence and honour, (though

God hath forbidden them to make such image of him). The Papists will pray before them, and the profane among them are zealous for them; when in the mean time they hate the most noble images of God on earth. Forbidden images of God have been defended, by seeking the blood of his truest images. Do you indeed love and honour the image of God? Why then do you hate them, and seek to destroy them? and why do you make them the scorn of your continual malice? Can you blow hot and cold? Can you both love and hate? both honour and scorn the image of God? Search the Scripture, and see whether it be not the sanctified, heavenly, diligent servants of the Lord that are the honourable images which he owneth, and magnifieth, and glorieth in before the world. If this be not true, then go on in your hatred of them and spare not. These are not images of stone, but of Spirit; not images made by a carver or a painter, but by the Holy Ghost himself. Not hanged upon a wall for men to look on, but living images, actuated from heaven, by spiritual influence from Christ their head, and shining forth in exemplary lives to the honour of their Father whom they resemble; Matt. v. 16. It is not in an outward shape, but in spiritual wisdom, and love, and holiness of heart and life, that they resemble the Creator. Whether you will believe it now or not, be sure of it, you malignant enemies of holiness, that God would shortly make you know it, that you choose out the most excellent image of your Maker under heaven, to pour out your hatred and contempt against. And inasmuch as you did it unto his most noble images, you did it unto him.

(7.) If all this be not enough to shew you the honourable nature of holiness, I will speak the highest word that can be spoken of any created nature under heaven, and yet no more than God hath spoken; even in 2 Pet. i. 4. where it is expressly said, that the godly are "partakers of the Divine nature." I know that it is not the essence of God that is here called the Divine nature that we partake of; we abhor the thoughts of such blasphemous arrogancy, as if that grace did make men gods. But it is called the Divine nature, in that it is caused by the Spirit of God, and floweth from him as the light or sunshine floweth from the sun. You use to say the sun is in the house, when it shineth in the house, though the sun itself be in the firmament. So the Scripture saith that God dwelleth in us, and Christ and the Spirit

dwelleth in us, when the heavenly light, and love, and life, which streameth from him dwelleth in us; and this is called the Divine nature. Think of this, and tell me whether higher and more honourable things can easily be spoken of the sons of men. "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him:" 1 John iv. 16. O wonderful advancement! high expressions of a creature's dignity! Blessed be that eternal love that is thus communicative, and hath so ennobled our unworthy souls! With what alacrity and delight should we exalt his name by daily praises that thus exalteth us by his unspeakable mercies? "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk O Lord in the light of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted. For thou art the glory of our strength; and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted. For the Lord is our defence, and the Holy One of Israel is our king;" Psal. lxxxix. 15—17. lxxv. 19. "Let them praise the name of the Lord; for his name alone is excellent: his glory is above the earth and heavens. He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints;" Psal. cxlviii. 13, 14. He hath "first exalted our blessed Head, even highly exalted him by his own right hand, and given him a name above every name;" (Acts ii. 33. v. 31. Phil. ii. 9.) and with him he hath wonderfully exalted all his sanctified ones. "For it became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren;" Heb. ii. 10, 11. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ;" 1 Cor. xii. 12. What greater honour can man on earth be advanced to? And the honour of the just is communicative to the societies of which they are members. The churches are called holy for their sakes. "By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted; but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked;" Prov. xi. 11. "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people;" chap. xiv. 34. Let therefore both the persons and congregations of the saints continually exalt the name of God. "O bless the Lord for ever and ever, and blessed be his glorious

name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise;" Neh. ix. 5. "The Lord liveth, and blessed be our Rock, and exalted be the God of our Rock of our salvation;" 2 Sam. xxii. 47. "I will extol thee O Lord, for thou hast lifted me up;" Psal. xxx. 1. "And now shall my head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord;" Psal. xxvii. 6. "The Lord is their strength, the saving strength of his anointed. He will save his people, and bless his inheritance, and feed them also, and lift them up for ever;" Psal. xxviii. 8, 9. "The Lord lifteth up the meek, and casteth the wicked down to the ground;" Psal. cxlvii. 6. Thus shall it be done to them whom God honoureth. "He will deliver them and honour them;" Psal. xci. 15.

4. And as the sanctified have the most honourable dispositions, so have they the highest and most honourable designs. The end of their lives is incomparably above other men's. The rest of the world (though they may talk of heaven, and wish for it rather than hell, when they can live no longer) do indeed drive on no greater trade, than providing for the flesh, and feathering them a nest which will quickly be pulled down; and like the spider, spinning themselves a web, which death will shortly sweep away. But the design and daily business of the godly is for everlasting glory. "They look for a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.—They confess themselves strangers and pilgrims on earth, thereby declaring that they seek a country. And truly if they were mindful of that (deceitful world) which they came out of (and have forsaken), they may have opportunities (and too many invitations) to return to it. But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly. Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city;" Heb. xi. 10. 13—16. This noble end ennobleth both the persons and conversations of believers. To rule a kingdom is a more noble design than to play with children for pins or points. But to seek the everlasting kingdom is far above all the highest designs that are terminated upon earth. If everlasting glory with God in heaven be a more noble state than a worldly life, then must the seeking it be a more noble design. Paul sheweth you the

difference very pathetically, Phil. iii. 18. "For many walk (of whom I told you often, and now tell you weeping) that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. But our conversation is in heaven." That is, we live as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, and not as those that are here at home. It is heaven that sanctifies persons' minds; that they study and care for, and labour and live for in this world. And therefore though in their natural capacity, they are but as other men, yet in their moral and relative capacity, I think I may say without hyperbole, that they are much more advanced above the dignity of the great unsanctified princes upon earth than reason, and learning, and manly designs advance a man above a beast. It is the nobleness and baseness of the end that doth honour or debase the agent; and therefore none are truly honourable but those that seek the spiritual, the high eternal honour.

5. The employment, as well as the designs of the godly, do prove them to be the most honourable. Both the end and matter do shew the excellency of their work. As the end honoureth the person, so doth it honour all the works that are means thereto. The first thoughts of a godly man when he awaketh, and the last when he lieth down (if he observe his rule) are usually for heaven. When you are conversing with worldly men, about these common worldly things, they are in prayer or holy meditation conversing with God, about the matters of his service, and their salvation. Their hearts are toward him: their thoughts are on him: they are devoted to him: their daily business is to serve him. "When I awake (saith David, Psal. cxxxix. 28.) I am still with thee." "I will bless the Lord who hath given me counsel. My reins also instruct me in the night season. I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved;" Psal. xvi. 7, 8. The life of the godly is called in Scripture, "a walking with God." Such was the course of Enoch, Noah, and Abraham; Gen. v. 22. 24. vi. 9. xvii. 1. xxiv. 40. "They walked before God" (Gen. xlviii. 15.), and in his ways; Deut. xxviii. 9. They "love the Lord their God with all their heart and soul (as to the sincerity of it); and walk after him, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and serve him, and cleave unto

him ;” Deut. xiii. 3, 4. And can an inhabitant of this world have a more honourable employment than to serve the Lord ? and a more honourable state than to walk with God ? Should we not have thought such words intolerable to be used of the best on earth, if God had not been himself the author of them, and put them into our mouths ? Hear more of his own expressions concerning the conversations of his servants : “ God is faithful by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ ;” 1 Cor. i. 9. “ And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ ;” 1 John i. 3. By ‘ fellowship,’ is not meant here, a society of equals. God forbid we should think so blasphemously. But it is a communion of the beloved, sanctified creature with his blessed Creator, agreeable to his distance. In their secret addresses, his servants have communion with him. Their prayer is nothing else but a humble speaking to the living God, for the supply of all their wants. In their praises and thanksgivings it is God that they deal with ; and the “ words of their mouths, and the meditation of their hearts are acceptable in the sight of their Redeemer ;” Psal. xix. 14. They pour out their souls before him, and he openeth his ears and his bosom unto them ; Psal. lxii. 8. x. 17. “ He will feed his flock like a shepherd : he will gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young ;” Isa. xl. 11. And in the public worship of God in the holy assemblies, his servants also have communion with him. It is him that they hear whoever be the messenger. It is him that they admire, and praise, and magnify. “ Come (say they) and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob : and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths— Come, and let us walk in the light of the Lord ;” Isa. ii. 3. 5. “ We have thought of thy lovingkindness O God in the midst of thy temple ;” Psal. xlviii. 9. “ In his temple doth every man speak of his glory ;” Psal. xxix. 9. Yea, the common employments of the godly are sanctified, and thereby advanced above the highest actions of the wicked. For it is God and glory that is in all their ultimate ends. “ Whether they eat or drink, or whatever they do, they do it to his glory ;” 1 Cor. x. 31. That is, they intend his glory as their end, and they do it in reverent obedience to his will, and in a holy manner behaving themselves as may honour him whose work they do. And he that

hath the face to say, that prayer, praise, thanksgiving, meditation, holy conference, and other works of holiness and righteousness, are not a more honourable employment than the sordid drudgery of the world, must say also that the life of a worldling is more honourable than the life of the holy angels and the heavenly host. They are obeying and praising God, and living in the sense of his dearest love, while you are sinning and scraping in this earth. And can you believe that your life is more honourable than theirs? If not, you must confess that the godly that come nearest the work of angels, do live a more honourable life than you. When Christ called Peter to leave his fishing and follow him, and be his servant, he tells him that he will make him a fisher of men, as intimating that it was a more honourable work to catch souls by the Gospel, and win them to God and to salvation, than to catch fishes. To please God and save our souls, and further others in obeying him to their salvation, is the highest work that the sons of men are capable of while they live in flesh.

As the priests were sanctified to draw nearer unto God, than the common people, and to be employed in his most holy service, so are the godly separated by grace from the ungodly world, and brought nearer God, and used by him in the noblest works. "In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood, and of earth, and some to honour, and some to dishonour;" 1 Tim. ii. 20. "If a man therefore purge himself from sin, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work;" ver. 21. The vessel that swine are fed in, is not so honourable as that which is used at a prince's table. If you would know what use the godly are employed in, read 1 Pet. ii. 5. 9. "As lively stones they are built up a spiritual house: they are a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices unto God, which shall be acceptable by Jesus Christ. They are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people that they should shew forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light." The holy Scriptures tell you the work of saints. Compare them with the work of the drunkard, the glutton, the gamester, the fornicator, or the covetous, or ambitious worldling, and let your reason tell you which is the more honourable. "O fear the

Lord O ye saints ; for there is no want to them that fear him ;” Psal. xxix. 9. “ O love the Lord all ye his saints ; for the Lord preserveth the faithful ;” Psal. xxxi. 23. “ The heavens shall praise thy wonders O Lord : thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints. God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints : and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him ;” Psal. lxxxix. 5. 7. These are the employments of the saints.

6. Moreover, the godly have the most honourable entertainment by the God of all the world. They are bid welcome when others are rejected. The door is opened to them that is shut against the wicked. They are familiar with Jesus Christ, as the children of the family, when others are strangers whom he will not know. “ I will profess unto them, I never knew you : depart from me ye workers of iniquity ;” Matt. vii. 23. “ For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous : but the way of the ungodly shall perish ;” Psal. i. 6. The faithful are feasted by him, when the rest are examined with a “ Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment ? Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness ;” Matt. xxii. 12, 13. They are called the children that have the bread, and the rest are called the dogs ; of which some are without, and those within do feed but on the “ crumbs that fall from the children’s table ;” Matt. xv. 26, 27. Rev. xxii. 15. Hear the Lord’s invitation and his promise : “ Harken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good ; and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me, hear and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you ;” Isa. lv. 2, 3. Who is it that is admitted into the “ tabernacle of the Lord, and who shall dwell in his holy hill ? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.— In whose eyes a vile person is contemned, but he honoureth them that fear the Lord ;” Psal. xv. 1, 2, 4. “ The upright shall dwell in the presence of the Lord ;” Psal. cxl. 13. “ God will save Sion,— and the seed of his servants shall inherit it, and they that love his name shall dwell therein ;” Psal. lxix. 35, 36. And “ blessed is the man whom thou choosest, O Lord, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts : he shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple ;” Psal. lxxv. 4. Saith David, “ Mine eyes shall

be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me : he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me. Yea, Christ entertaineth faithful souls with a spiritual feast of his own flesh and blood. His flesh to them is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed ; John vi. 55. And “ he that eateth and drinketh these shall live for ever ;” ver. 54. 56. The returning prodigal is met with joy, and quickly embraced in his father’s arms ; the fatted calf is killed for him ; a ring and new apparel is provided for him ; and music must express the joy of his recovery ; Luke xv. O how welcome are converted sinners to the God of mercy ! And as they are welcome at their first return, so are they in all their attendance on him, and addresses to him, and service of him, while they continue in his family. They have boldness now “ to enter into the holiest, by the new and living way that is consecrated ;” and are invited “ to draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith ;” Heb. x. 19. 22. “ In Christ we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him ;” Ephes. iii. 12. And “ God hath made us accepted in the beloved, to the praise of the glory of his grace ;” chap. i. 6. “ We are living sacrifices, acceptable unto God ;” Rom. xii. 1. And our services though weak, are “ sacrifices acceptable and wellpleasing to him ;” Phil. iv. 18. 2 Tim. ii. 3. v. 4. When the “ prayers of the wicked are abhorred of the Lord, his people serve him acceptably in reverence and godly fear ;” Heb. xii. 28. He answereth their prayers, and often speaketh peace unto them, and signifieth his acceptance of them. If they could bring him a house full of gold and silver, they would not be so welcome to him as they are in bringing him their hearts, their humbled hearts, their broken, tender, melted hearts, that burn in love to him, and flame up towards him in desires and in holy praise. “ To this man will I look, saith the Lord, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word ;” Isa. lxvi. 2. This is the honourable entertainment of the saints.

7. And they are members of the most honourable society in the world. The church is the kingdom of Jesus Christ (Luke i. 33. Col. i. 13.) ; the kingdom of God (chap. xvii. 21. xviii. 17.) ; the kingdom of heaven ; Matt. iii. 2. xiii. 31. 33. 44. It is the school of Christ, or his university, in which believers are his scholars, learning to know him, and serve him, and praise him for ever, and trained up for ever-

lasting life ; Acts xi. 26. Luke vi. 13. Matt. v. 1, 2, &c. It is the family or household of God ; Eph. ii. 19. 1 Tim. iii. 15. Heb. x. 21. 1 Pet. iv. 17. It is the spouse, yea the body of Christ ; Eph. v. 25. So loved by him, that he gave himself for it, becoming the price of our redemption, and thought not his life too dear a ransom, nor his blood too precious to cleanse and save us ; ver. 25, 26. Tit. ii. 4. The church, which every godly man is a living member of, is a society chosen out of the world, to be nearest unto God, and dearest to him, as the beloved of his soul, to receive the choicest of his mercies, and be adorned with the righteousness of Christ, and to be employed in his special service ; 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5. 9. John xv. 19. Eph. i. 4. Psal. cxxxii. 13. cxxxv. 4. Eph. v. 1. The Lord that redeemed them is their King and Head, and dwelleth in the midst of them, and walketh among them, as the people of his special presence and delight ; Psal. ii. 6. lxxxix. 18. cxlix. 2. xlii. 5. Isa. xii. 6. Jer. xiv. 9. Zeph. iii. 5. 15. 17. Rev. i. 13. ii. 1. Psal. xcv. 2. The church is a heavenly society, though the militant part yet live on earth. For the God of heaven is the Sovereign and the Father of it. The glorified Redeemer is their Head. The Spirit of Christ doth guide and animate them. His laws revealed and confirmed from heaven, direct and govern them. Heaven is their end ; and heavenly are their dispositions, employments, and conversations. There is their portion and treasure ; Matt. vi. 20, 21. And there is their very heart and hope. “ They are risen with Christ, and therefore “ seek the things that are above. For their life is hid with Christ in God ;” Col. iii. 2—4. Their root is there ; and the noblest part of the society is there. For the glorified saints, and in some sort, the angels are of the same society with us, though they are in heaven, and we on earth. The whole family in heaven and earth is named from one and the same head ; Eph. iii. 15. “ We are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly, and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling,” &c. Heb. xii. 22—24. This is the honourable society of saints, the eye, the pearl of the whole creation.

8. Moreover, the godly have the most honourable attendance. The creatures are all theirs : though not in point of civil propriety, yet as means appointed and managed by God their Father, for their best advantage. The angels of God are ministering spirits for them : not as our servants, but as God's servants for our good. As ministers in the church are not the servants of men, but the servants of God for men. And so, "whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present or to come, all are ours ;" 1 Cor. iii. 22. The shepherd's servant is not the servant of the sheep, but for the sheep. And so the angels disdain not to serve God in the guarding of the weakest saints. As I formerly shewed you from Heb. i. 14. and Psal. xci. 11, 12. and xxxiv. 7. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. For he giveth his angels charge over us, to keep us in all our ways : they shall bear us up in their hands, lest we dash our foot against a stone." Sun and moon, and all the creatures, are daily employed in our attendance. O how wonderful is the love of God to his unworthy servants in their advancement ! Remember it when thou art scorning at the servants of the Lord, or speaking against them, that those poor, those weak despised Christians, that thou art vilifying, have their "angels beholding the face of God their Father in the heavens. Take heed therefore that ye despise not the least of these." It is the warning of Christ, Matt. xviii. 10. The same blessed spirits that attend the Lord, and see his face in blissful glory, do attend and guard the meanest of the godly here on earth. As the same servants use to wait upon the Father and the children, in the same family, or the bigger children to help the less.

9. And it is the honour of the godly, that they that are themselves most honourable, do honour them. To be magnified by a fool, or wicked flatterer, is small honour ; but to be magnified by the best and wisest men, this is true honour. We say that honour is in him that giveth it, and not in him that receiveth it. But it is God himself that honoureth his saints. It is he that speaketh all these great and wondrous things of them, which I have hitherto recited. Search the texts which I have alleged, and try whether it be not he. And surely to have the God of heaven to applaud a man, and put honour upon him, and so great honour, is more than if

all the world had done it. Yet we may add (if any thing could be considerable that is added unto the approbation of God), that all his servants, the wisest, and the best, even his holy angels, are of the same mind, and honour the godly in conformity to their Lord.

And here Christian, I require thee from the Lord, to consider the greatness of thy sin and folly, when thou art too desirous of the applause of men, especially of the blind, ungodly world; and when thou makest a great matter of their contempt or scorn, or of their slanderous censures. What! is the approbation of the eternal God so small a matter in thy eyes, that the scorn of a fool can weigh it down, or move the balance with thee? If a feather were put into the scales against a mountain, or the whole earth, it should weigh as much as the esteem or disesteem of men, their honouring thee, or dishonouring thee, should weigh against the esteem of God, and the honour or dishonour that he puts upon thee (as to any regard of the thing itself; though as it reflecteth on God, thou mayst regard it). He is the wise man that God calls wise; and he is the fool that God calls fool, (and that is every one that "layeth up riches for himself, and is not rich towards God;" Luke xii. 20, 21.) He is the happy man that God calls happy; and he is a miserable man that God counts miserable; and who those are you may see in Psal. i. and many Scriptures before cited. Hear the words (and you that are believers lay up the blessed promise) of Christ himself, John xii. 26. "If any man serve me, him will my Father honour." And who cares then for the dishonours of all the wicked of the world? Our "tried faith as more precious than gold, will be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ;" 1 Pet. i. 7. See 2 Tim. ii. 21. We must learn therefore to imitate our Lord; and not to receive our honour from men; and not to imitate the wicked "that receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God." There is enough for us in God's approbation. And yet all his servants do imitate their Lord; and his judgment is their judgment; and whom he honoureth, them do they honour; angels, and saints, and all that enter into the tabernacle of the Lord, do "contemn the vile, and honour them that fear the Lord;" Psal. xv. 4. And though no man's judgment or praise be valuable in comparison of the Lord's, yet the honour and praise that is given

by the wise and godly, is more than a thousand times as much from ignorant ungodly men. If the Athenian orator regarded the censure of Socrates more than of all the rest of his auditors, we have cause to judge the eulogies of experienced holy men a greater honour than of thousands of the wicked, and greater than all their contempt or scorn is able to weigh down. The applause of the wicked is oftentimes a dishonour in wise men's eyes. Was it not Balaam's chiefest honour to hear from Balak, "I thought to promote thee to great honour, but the Lord hath kept thee back from honour;" Numb. xxiv. 11. The honour that God keepeth a man from is no honour; but is an honour to be kept from such honour by the Lord. Innocent poverty is incomparably more honourable than riches by iniquity, which is the greatest shame.

10. Lastly, it is unspeakable, everlasting honour that holiness doth tend unto, and which holy men shall enjoy with God. The very relation of a godly man to his everlasting glory, is an honour ten thousand times surpassing the honour of all the kingdoms of the world. If you did but know that one of your poor neighbours should certainly be a king, would you not presently honour him, even in his rags? You may know that the saints shall reign with Christ, as sure as if an angel from heaven had told you so, and more; and therefore how should a saint be honoured? If God had but legibly marked out some among you for salvation, and written in their foreheads 'This man shall be saved,' would not all the parish reverence that man? Why, a heavenly mind, and the love of God, self-denial, and holy obedience, are heaven-marks infallible, as true as the Gospel, and written by the same hand as the Gospel was, I mean by the Spirit of God himself. If a voice from heaven should speak now of any person in the congregation, and say, 'This man shall reign in heaven for ever,' would it not be an honour above all your worldly honours? Why, holiness is God's image, and the Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, and beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the sons of God, and have the promise, and seals, and bath of God for our certainty; yea, and the knowledge of God in Christ is the beginning of eternal life. And what would we have more? The presence of Christ in a little of his glory upon the mount, transported the three disciples: and the glimpse of the glory of God which Moses saw, did make his face shine that the Israelites

could not behold it. The approach of the saints to God in holy worship here on earth, are exceeding honourable, because they anticipate of heaven, and it is upward that they look. "Glory and honour are in his presence: strength and gladness are in his place." The soul that is beholding God by faith, and conversing with the heavenly inhabitants, is quite above all earthly things: and as angels are more honourable than men, and heaven than earth, so are believers that converse in heaven with angels, yea with Christ himself by faith, more honourable than terrestrial carnal men.

But the great honour is behind; yet near at hand; when the promised crown is set upon their heads. O mark the honour that is promised them by the Lord of truth. The soul itself before the resurrection of the body, shall be with Christ; Phil. i. 23. Even present with the Lord; 2 Cor. v. 1. 8. "If any man serve me, let him follow me, and where I am there shall also my servant be;" John xii. 26. And at the resurrection Christ that hath "loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it—will present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish;" Eph. v. 25, 26. Will they not be honourable even in the eyes of the ungodly world, when they hear the sentence of their Lord, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;" Matt. xxv. 34. and ver. 23. "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." When Christ "shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe;" Mark here, that it is one end of the coming of Christ, to be glorified and admired in his saints: "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him;" Jude 14, 15. "Our hearts shall be established, unblamable in holiness before God even our Father at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints;" 1 Thess. iii. 12, 13. We shall then praise him "that hath loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests to God;" Rev. i. 5, 6. "He that overcometh shall be clothed with white raiment, and confessed by Christ before the Father and the

angels of heaven ;" chap. iii. 5. Yea, he shall be a pillar in the temple of God, and go out no more : and Christ will write on him the name of God, and the name of the city of God, New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from God, and his own name ;" ver. 12. Yea, he will " grant to him to sit with him in his throne, as he himself hath overcome and is set down with his Father in his throne ;" ver. 21. And he will honour his saints to be judges of angels, and of the world ; 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3. And " they that overcome and keep his words unto the end, to them will be given power over the nations, and they shall rule with a rod of iron, and break them to shivers as the vessels of a potter ; even as Christ received of his Father ; and he will give them the morning star ;" Rev. ii. 26, 27. " He that hath an ear to hear let him hear" the glorious things that are promised to the saints. " The high praises of God shall be in their mouths and the two-edged sword in their hands—— to execute on the wicked the judgment written, such honour have all his saints ;" Psal. cxlix. 6, 9. Then shall we hear the praises of the heavenly society saying, " We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come, because thou hast taken to thee thy great power and hast reigned, and the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints and them that fear thy name, small and great, and shouldst destroy them that dwell on the earth." " Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear ;" Matt. xiii. 43. Yea, " they shall be equal to the angels of God ;" Luke xx. 36. This is the inheritance of the saints in light, of which God is now making us meet to be partakers ; Col. i. 12. If " all that sat in the council against him, saw Stephen's face as it had been the face of an angel" (Acts vi. 15.), what shall be the glory of the saints when themselves shall see the face of God, and his name shall be written in their foreheads ; (Rev. xxii. 4.) when the ungodly world shall know, that holiness was the most honourable state ?

But perhaps some will say, that ' this language will make them proud. To tell them that they are the most honourable persons in the world, is the way to make them the proudest persons.'

To which I give you a manifold answer that your objection may not have the least pretence that it is unsatisfied.

1. Worldly honours are of a more swelling nature than heavenly honours ; and yet it would scarcely be taken well, if this conclusion should pass for current, that the most honourable are the most proud. For then it would follow that none are so vile, so like the devil, so unlike God : and so the princes and nobles of the earth would become the most despicable persons in the world, and their very honour itself would be their dishonour, and so no honour. And if worldly honours will not warrant you to conclude the persons to be most proud, much less will the heavenly honour.

2. There is the more need and the less fear of the honour of the godly, because it is the blessing of a humbled soul. God casts them down before he lifts them up. It is only the humble that he exalteth. They feel their sin and misery before they know their honour. A broken heart hath need of healing, and a fainting soul is fittest for a cordial. You need not fear when you refresh the sick, lest it should make them wanton, as it may do the sound. A comfortable word to one that is lamenting over the dead, and weeping at a grave, is not so likely to make them proud, as to others in prosperity. A drooping and discouraged soul is hardly raised high enough, and kept from sinking. They have had the sentence past upon them, and have had the rope as it were about their neck : they have been at the very gates of hell ; they have seen by faith what work, what woes there are for sin in the life to come, and therefore these souls have need to hear of their felicity.

3. Moreover, they have a great deal of work to do ; and their strength and courage is too small ; and the work is such as flesh and blood cannot away with, much less afford them sufficient strength for. Such labourers must have encouraging, strengthening food. Their work is such as will keep them under. God doth not keep his servants idle ; and therefore they are in less danger of waxing proud and wanton. " They shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God ;" Isa. xxxv. 1—4. And why is this foretold them ? " Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not ; behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence ; he will come and save you ;"

"Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed;" Heb. xii. 12, 13. We are commanded, 1 Thess. v. 14. as to "warn them that are unruly so to comfort the feeble-minded, and support the weak."

4. Moreover, the godly have the greater need of such encouragements, because they have much suffering to undergo. They have all your hatred and scorns to suffer, and all the adversities of the world, with which their Father shall please to exercise them. And he that layeth the burden on them, will give them strength by strengthening means. God's net hath corks as well as leads. If birds had not feathers as well as flesh, they would be unable to fly. As Christ himself was encouraged to endure the contradiction of sinners, and to "bear the cross, and despise the shame by looking at the joy that was set before him, and so for the suffering of death was crowned with glory and honour" (Heb. xii. 2, 3. ii. 9.), so will he have his people tread in his steps, and take up their cross and follow him, and deny themselves and all the world; yet so as to "look at the recompence of reward, and seek for glory, honour, and immortality," and by these to be animated to the work and patience of the saints, as expecting to be glorified with him, when they have suffered with him; Matt. xvi. 24. x. 38. Heb. xi. 26. Rom. ii. 7. viii. 17, 18. As the angel said to Elijah, 1 Kings xix. 7. "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for thee," so God encourageth his servants by his honours and rewards, because the journey, the labour, the suffering is too great without such encouragement to be cheerfully undergone. And in the strength of these consolations they bear the cross.

5. The objection is most against the Lord. If it be an error to honour and extol the godly, as tending to make them proud, it is God himself that is the owner of it. The words that I have recited to you are his own words. Do we devise these sayings? or do we not shew them you in the Scripture? And dare you charge God with error, or encouraging pride? Do you think he knew not what he said, when he spake such honourable things of his servants? Did he need you to have taught him to have indited his word, and to have warned him that he make not his servants proud! as if he hated not pride as much as you.

6. Yea, God will do more than this for his servants; he will advance them to salvation, and yet he will not make them proud. There is no pride in heaven, though there be the greatest glory. The angels are most glorious, and yet least proud. If you would not wish God to keep men out of heaven lest it make them proud, you should not grudge at his honouring them on earth, with the mention of their heavenly titles upon that account.

7. The exaltation of the saints is a spiritual exaltation, which is not so apt to make men proud, as carnal exaltation is. Charity puffeth not up, as airy knowledge doth. It is selfishness that is the life of pride (which consisteth in excessive self-esteem, and desire of an excessive esteem with others, and to be magnified by them). And nothing but grace can subdue this selfishness, and therefore nothing else can destroy pride.

8. Moreover, the honour of the saints is the less like to make them proud, because humility is part of the grace that is bestowed on them. To be proud and holy is to be sick and well, to be light and dark: they are plain contraries. No man is proud but for want of holiness; and therefore that holiness should efficiently make men proud is impossible, any more than health can make men sick, or darkness can be caused by light. And if objectively any be proud of his holiness, that is but in such a measure as he is unholy. Holiness doth ever mortify pride, and contain humility and self-denial, as an essential part. All Christ's disciples learn of him in their measure to be meek and lowly.

9. Let experience try you whether it be not some worldly honour, or parts and gifts, that are the much commoner objects of pride than holiness. I have oft heard talk of men being proud of their humility and holiness; but the temptations of my own soul have comparatively lain but little that way; nor have I observed it the common case of others, in any proportion with other kinds of pride. Riches and honours, and beauty and dignity, I see people ordinarily proud of. And I see many proud of counterfeit graces, that have none that is sincere (as far as may be perceived by others) to be proud of. And I see many proud of their learning, and knowledge, and nimble tongues, a hundredfold more than ever I found true Christians proud of the love of God, and a heavenly mind. Alas, we have much ado for the most part,

to discern that we have any of this at all, and to find so much of it in ourselves as is necessary to our support and thankfulness.

10. Lastly, Consider what abundance of means the Lord hath adjoined as antidotes with his servant's honours to keep them from being puffed up with pride; and then tell me whether you dare charge God with error or want of wisdom in this thing.

1. The nature and life of holiness consisteth in the soul's retiring home to God, and adhering to him, and walking as before him. And there is not a more powerful means in the world, to keep humble the soul, than the knowledge of God. O, when a poor sinner hath but any lively apprehensions of the greatness and glory of the Lord, it amazeth him, and levelleth him with the dust, and abaseth him in his own esteem, and maketh him say with Job, "Behold I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes;" Job xl. 4—6. One glimpse of God were enough to humble any soul that truly knoweth him. A godly man hath still to do with that Majesty that continually aweth him. His heart is with him; his thoughts are on him; his work is with him. It is his word that he readeth, and heareth, and discourseth of, and therefore as his word, with reverence and godly fear, as knowing that our God is a consuming fire; Heb. xii. 28, 29. It is God that he prayeth to, that he meditateth on, and he praiseth, and hath still to do with. And therefore no wonder if he walk humbly with so holy and great a God.

2. The sin and misery that once they were in, while they knew not God, will do much to keep humble a gracious soul as long as they live. Though God so forget our sins as to forgive them, yet we can scarce forgive ourselves, or at least can never forget them. Though he see no sin in his servants as he seeth it in the world, nor so as to hate and condemn them for it; yet they see that once they were as bad as the world, and were children of wrath as well as others. They condemn themselves when God doth justify them; and set their sins before their faces, which God doth cast behind his back. O, those dark, those ungrateful, and those perilous days, will never be forgotten by the renewed soul! The

thoughts of them shall ever keep us humble. When we look on the wicked, miserable world, to think that such were many of us, though mercy have washed, and sanctified, and justified us.

3. Moreover, God hath so contrived the way of their salvation, that they shall have all by a Redeemer, and by most free grace, and none shall be justified by the works of the law, nor by any merit of his own; but boasting is excluded by the law of faith; Rom. iii. 19. 27, 28. And we shall have nothing but what we receive besides and contrary to our desert.

4. And alas too much corruption still remaineth in us. We have "flesh that fighteth against the Spirit;" Rom. vii. 24. Gal. v. 17. "We know but in part," and love God but in part, and serve him with such constant weakness, that these things are usually such humbling matters to a gracious soul, that were it not for the Comforter, they would be unable to look up. O to feel how dark we are! how far from God! how strange to heaven! how little we believe, and know, and love! these are humbling thoughts indeed to a soul that is acquainted with itself. No poverty, beggary, or the reproach in the world, would be so humbling to them. To find such remnants of that odious sin, that cost them dear, and had cost them dearer, if it had not cost their Lord so dear, this is constant matter of humiliation.

5. And too often do their corruptions get advantage of them, and produce some actual sin, of thought, word, or deed: and this also must be grievous to them.

6. The very bodily infirmities of believers are a constant help to keep them humble. They have all this "treasure but in earthen vessels;" 2 Cor. iv. 7. Their souls are here so poorly lodged in corruptible tabernacles of earth, and so meanly clothed with frail, diseased, mortal flesh, that it is madness to be proud.

7. And the many and great afflictions of the godly, are medicines that are purposely given them by their Physician to cure pride, and keep them humble. Why else must their sufferings be so many? and why must they daily bear the cross? but that they may be conformed to the image of Christ.

8. And to the same end it is that God doth let loose upon

them so many enemies. All satan's temptations and the world's allurements and vexations, and all their disappointments here, and all the scorns and mocks of the ungodly, and the censures and slanders of wicked tongues, and often bitter persecutions, what are they but the bitter medicines of God (permitted and ordered by him, though caused by the devil and wicked men), to save the servants of the Lord from the sin and danger of being lifted up? Do you say, that their honour will make them proud? Why, you that thus oppose them and despise them, are curing them of their pride, and do not know it; as scullions scour the rust off the vessels for their master's use; and as leeches draw out the blood that causeth the disease; and as the Jews by their sin promoted the redemption of the world by the death of Christ. When God seeth his servants in danger of being lifted up above measure, he oft sendeth a messenger of satan (who may be an executioner of God's chastisements) to buffet them (2 Cor. xii. 7.), sometimes by slanders, sometimes by reproaches, sometimes by imprisonments, or greater sufferings, and sometimes by horrid troublesome temptations.

9. The very foresight of death itself is a humbling means, and the last enemy death is yet unconquered, and our bodies must corrupt in dust and darkness, and be kept in the grave as common earth, till the resurrection, that the soul may not grow proud that hath such a body.

10. And the day of judgment is so described to us in the Scripture, as tends to keep the soul in awe and in humility. To think of such a day, and such a reckoning, before such a God, methinks should humble us.

11. And our absolution and glorification at that day, is promised us now but conditionally, (though God will see that the condition be performed by all that he will save.) And therefore the poor soul is oft so far to seek about the certain sincerity of his own faith and repentance, that most of the godly are kept in fears and doubtings to the death. Yea, and humility and self-denial are part of this condition; and all their honour and glory with Christ is promised to the humble only. Humility is commanded them in the precept; humility is it that they are exhorted to by the ministers; and pride is threatened with everlasting wrath, and described as the devil's image. So that holiness hath all the advantages against pride that can be here expected.

12. To conclude; the godly know that as they have nothing but from God, so they have nothing but for God: so that their own honour is for him, more than for themselves; and it is essential to their holiness, to make God their end, and set him highest, and refer all to his pleasure and glory. So that you see now that we may honour them that fear the Lord (Psal. cxv, 4.), without being guilty of making them proud, and that we must not deny them the honour that God hath given them as their due, for fear of their being proud of it. Though this, as all things else, must be prudently managed to particular persons, according to their various states.

And therefore let me here warn all you that profess the fear of God: take heed lest you be proud of any thing that God hath honoured you with; for if you be, you see what an army of reasons and means you sin against; and consequently how great your sin will be. And your consciences and the world shall be forced to justify God and his holy ways, and to prove against you, that it was not long of them that you were proud, and that none in the world was more against it than God and holiness; and that it was not because you were so religious, but because you were no more religious. And if pride of knowledge, gifts, or whatsoever, be unmortified in you, it will certainly prove that you are none of the sanctified; when your profession of sanctity will never prove that sanctity was a cause or confederate in your sin.

And now I have shewed you the honour of godliness, let us briefly (and but briefly,) consider of your honour that reject it, and see then whether the godly or ungodly are more honourable.

1. Ungodly men have the basest master in the world. Would you know who? Let Christ be judge; "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do;" John viii. 44. They are "taken captive by the devil at his will" (2 Tim. ii. 26.); that is, to do his will. It is he that stirreth you up to filthy talking, to speak against godliness, to curse and swear, and you do his will. His will is that you should neglect a holy life, and you do his will. His will is that you live not after the Spirit, but after the flesh, and you do his will. O poor souls! do you think it is only witches that expressly covenant with him, that are his miserable ser-

vants? Alas! it is you also, if you do his will. For (if you will believe either God or common reason) "to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness;" Rom. vi. 16. The godly themselves were the servants of sin, till they "obeyed from the heart the doctrine of the Lord," ver. 17. And are you not come to fair preferment, to be the devil's drudges? Though he should clothe your bodies with purple and fine linen, and feed you sumptuously every day, yet indeed you are no better, as the case of that miserable man may tell you, Luke xvi. It is the greatest baseness to have so base a master.

2. And it is but an ignoble, base design that the ungodly carry on in the world. What is it but to provide for, and please their flesh? It aimeth at nothing beyond this life. And a beast can eat, and drink, and sleep, and play, and satisfy his lust, as much as they. A swine can carry a mouth full of straw to his lodging, and a bird can build a nest for her young ones. And what do ungodly men more in the world, whether gentlemen or beggars, the flattered gallants or the poor day-labourers, if they be not such as first seek heaven, and live to God, what do they but make a pudder in the world, about a little dirt or smoke? and find themselves somewhat to do that is next to nothing, instead of that for which they were created? and busy themselves about nothing till their time is gone, and the night is come when none can work? If you would judge of a man's designs, foresee his attainments. If you can tell what end it is that they come to, you may know how to judge of their intentions and their course. Their corpses, you know have no greater a happiness, (after a few foolish merry hours) than to lie in the earth as filth or dust. You can see no honour attained there. It is a child indeed that thinks a gilded monument over a rotten carcase, is any great matter of honour or benefit to it. And if you look after the soul, (by the prospective of the word of God,) alas, it goeth to far greater dishonour. And is this it that worldlings make such a stir for?

3. The work also that they are employed in, is like the design. Sin, which is the basest thing in the world, is their employment. The work of a scullion, or the basest honest trade you can imagine, is a thousand times less dishonoura-

ble than sin. Yet flattered gallants believe not this, when they can please their flesh without losing the reputation of worthy gentlemen! Nor will our common ungodly people be persuaded of it, that are more ashamed to be found praying than sinning, and to be called Puritan than a good fellow or a swearer; and that think they are as good men as others, when up to the ears in the drudgery of the devil: as if the filth of sin were no dishonour to them, which nothing but the Spirit and blood of Christ is able to wash out. These are the men that Paul mentioneth with weeping, that mind earthly things, "whose god is their belly, and who glory in their shame;" Phil. iii. 18.

4. Moreover, it is a base disposition that ungodly men are possessed with. Though their natures are essentially noble, as being the work of God, and capable of most glorious things; yet have they made them dispositively vile: they are fleshlyminded, earthlyminded, ignorant of heavenly things, not savouring the things of the Spirit, but like the serpent, crawling on earth, and feeding on the dust. Grass is sweeter to a horse than junkets; and a little money or vainglory is sweeter to a fleshly mind than God and glory, and all the treasures of saints and angels. A swine never thinks of God or heaven, but of his draff and sty. Ease, and good cheer, and money, and the flattery of men, are the god and the heaven of sensual men. And are not these men of base, dishonourable spirits? Unworthy men! might you have an everlasting life, and will you prefer a few days fleshly pleasure? As sure as you may know the baseness of a swine or dog by what they feed upon, so surely may you know the baseness of a carnal mind, by the baseness of its desires and delights.

5. It is also a base society that ungodly men are members of. They are in the "kingdom of darkness;" Col. i. 13. Acts xxvi. 18. And are "dead in sin, in which they walk according to the course of the world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, among whom they have their conversation;" Eph. ii. 1—3. Devils are their invisible companions, and wicked men their visible; but they have none of the presence and favour of the Lord, nor any communion with him in the Spirit.

6. The greatest dishonour of the ungodly is, that the God

of heaven refuseth to honour them; yea, he despiseth them, yea he dishonoureth them with the most contemptuous titles. And certainly God knoweth what he saith of them; and it is impossible that he should do them wrong. Yet doth he call them the seed of the serpent, that stand at enmity with his flock; Gen. iii. 15. He calls them his enemies, and accordingly will use them; Luke xix. 27. He calls them dogs and swine, and the children of the devil; John viii. 44. Matt. vii. 6. They dishonour and despise him, and he will dishonour and despise them, and hath resolved that their very names shall rot; Prov. x. 7.

7. But it is the everlasting shame that will tell us what was the honour of the ungodly. When Christ shall be ashamed of them before his Father and the heavenly angels (Matt. viii. 38.), and shall tell them that he never knew them; Matt. vii. 23. When all their former pomp and splendour will be turned into perpetual shame and sorrows, then where is the honour of the ungodly world? Where then are their flatterers? Who boweth to them, and calleth them Right Honourable and Right Worshipful any more? Where now are their sumptuous houses and attendance? Now they have other kind of servitors, and other language, and other usage than they had on earth. And the poor wretches that stormed at a faithful minister for foretelling these woeful changes to them, and speaking so dishonourably of them, as to tell them of their sin, are at last saying a hundredfold worse of themselves, than ever we did say against them. Then they shall need none to call them fools, and vile, and wretches, but their own consciences, that will speak it out, and speak it again ten thousand times, and never be bribed to forbear. O how base a despicable generation will the ungodly then be (that now speak so stoutly and look so high) when God shall everlastingly frown them into contempt and misery, and the glorified saints shall look down upon them without compassion, even praising the justice that for ever doth torment them! Then let the kings and nobles of the earth maintain their ancient honours if they can. Or let them take comfort in the remembrance of their former dreams, and try whether this will be to them instead of a drop of water.

Well, sirs, I have faithfully told you from the word of God, of the honour of the godly, and the baseness of the ungodly, that you may be resolved, which is the better part

If yet you will not see, you shall see and be ashamed ; Isa. xxvi. 11. When you have heard your last and dreadful doom, and seen the Lord make up his jewels ; “ then shall you discern between the righteous and the wicked ; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not ; ” Mal. iii. 17, 18.

CHAPTER X.

Holiness is the most Pleasant way.

I HAVE proved beyond all reasonable contradiction that holiness is the safe, the honest, the profitable, and the honourable state and course. But my hardest task is yet to be done ; and that is, to prove it the most pleasant way. And the difficulty of this is not at all from the matter, but from the persons with whom I have to do. For nothing is pleasant unto men but what is suitable to their natures, and apprehended by them to be for their good, or in itself more excellent than their good. That is pleasant to one man that is loathsome to another. As the food and converse is delightful to a beast, that is loathsome and as bad as death to man, so one man's pleasure is another's pain. Even about the common matters of this life, variety of complexions, educations, customs, and dispositions, doth cause a variety of affections ; the difference between the sanctified and unsanctified, the spiritual and the carnal mind, doth cause a greater contrariety. If therefore the error of wicked minds, or the distemper of your souls, do make the best things seem the worst, and the sweetest things to seem most bitter, this is no confutation of my argument, that proves the way of godliness most pleasant. If I would prove that wine is pleasanter than vinegar, or bread than dirt or ashes, I mean not to appeal to the appetites of the sick ; it is the sound and healthful that must be judges. If a man will suffer his mind to be possessed with prejudice and base thoughts of God himself, no wonder if he cannot love him, nor take any delight in him.

And if men have a malignant enmity to godliness, no reason will persuade them that it is most pleasant, but what persuades them from that enmity. No reason will persuade a slothful person that labour is better than sleep and idleness ; no reason will persuade a drunkard, glutton, or voluptuous wretch, that abstinence and continence are the sweetest life. Could we change their hearts, we should change their pleasures. Such as men are, such are their delights. But the thing that I undertake, is, to manifest to any competent discerner, that holiness is the most pleasant course ; and that all the pleasures of the earth are nothing to the pleasures which the godly find in God, and in a holy life. And if any be not of this mind, it is because his soul's diseases have made him an incompetent judge. And that godliness is the most pleasant state of life, will appear to you, I. From the nature of the thing itself. II. From the encouragements and helps with which it is attended. III. From the effects and fruits.

I. The nature of holiness is to be found, 1. In the understanding. II. In the will and affections. And III. In the practice of men's lives. And in all these I shall shew you that it is the most delightful course.

1. Knowledge in itself is a pleasant thing to human nature. Ignorance is the blindness of the soul. It is not so pleasant for the eye to behold the sun, as for the mind of man to discern the truth. To know good and evil had never been the matter of so strong a temptation to Adam, if knowledge had not been very desirable to innocent nature. How hard do many even ungodly persons study to know the mysteries of nature. And nothing hath more strongly tempted some wretches to witchcraft or contracts with the devil, than a desire of knowing unrevealed things, which by his means they have hoped to attain. A studious man hath far more natural, valuable delight in his reading and successful studies, than a voluptuous epicure hath in his sensual delights.

But it is a special kind of knowledge that holiness doth (initially) consist in, which transcendeth in true pleasure all the common wisdom of the world. For,

1. How pleasant a thing must it needs be to know things of so high a nature ! To know the Almighty, living God ; to behold his wisdom, goodness, and power, in his glorious

works ; to be led to him by all the creatures, and hear of him by every providence, and find his holy, blessed name in every leaf of his sacred word ; how sweet and pleasant a thing is this ! To know the Divine nature, persons, attributes, and will ; to know the mystery of the incarnation, of the person, nature, undertaking, performance of the blessed Mediator, Jesus Christ ; to know his birth, his life, temptations, conquests, his righteousness, his holy doctrine and example, the law and promise, the law of nature and the covenant of grace ; the sufferings, resurrection, ascension, glorification, and intercession of our Lord ; to know his kingdom, laws, and government, and his judgment, with his rewards and punishments ; to know the sanctifying works of the Holy Ghost, by which we are prepared for everlasting life ; and to know that life (though but by faith) for which we are here prepared ; how high and pleasant a thing is this ! If it be pleasant to know the course of nature, in those higher parts that are above the vulgar reach, what is it to know the God of nature, and the true use and end of nature ? What high things doth the poorest Christian know ! He knoweth the things that are invisible.

Think not that faith is so void of evidence as not to deserve the name of knowledge. We know the things which we do believe. Nicodemus could say from the evidence of miracles, " We know that thou art a teacher come from God ; for no man could do these miracles that thou dost, except God be with him ;" John iii. 2. " We know that God spake to Moses" (chap. ix. 29), say the Jews. We know that the Scripture testimony is true ; chap. xxi. 24. " We know (even by believing) that if this earthly house of our tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens ;" 2 Cor. v. 1. " We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is ;" 1 John iii. 2. " At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you ;" chap. xiv. 20. We know that no whoremonger or such like shall inherit eternal life ; Eph. v. 5. We know that our " labour is not in vain in the Lord ;" 1 Cor. xv. 58. Many such passages of Scripture tell us, that faith is a certain knowledge, and that invisible things revealed by God are certainly known. We know what saints and angels are now doing in the highest heavens ; for God hath told us. We know the most high

and glorious things revealed by God, which we never saw. And is not the pleasure of such knowledge greater than the pleasure of all the wealth, the honour, and sensual enjoyments in this world! I durst almost refer the case to one of you that are most befooled by your own sensuality. If you could go to-morrow and meet with a soul from heaven, or with an angel, that could tell you what becomes of souls, and what is done in another world, would you not rather go to such a conference, than go as far to a drinking, or a bowling, or some such recreation? I think you would, if it were but to satisfy your curiosity and desire of knowing. Why then should not the servants of Christ more delight in the reading and hearing the words of Christ, that came from the bosom of the Father, that hath seen God, and is with God, and is God himself, that telleth them more certainly of the invisible things than any saints or angels can tell them? Why should not this, I say, be sweeter to them than all the fleshly pleasures in the world? O that I could know more of God, and more of the mystery of redemption, even of an obedient, crucified, glorified Christ; and more of the invisible world, and of the blessed state of souls, on condition I left all the pleasures of this world to sensual men! O that I had more clear and firm apprehensions of these transcendent, glorious things! How easily could I spare the pleasures of the flesh, and leave those husks to swine to feed on! O could my soul get nearer to God, and be more irradiated with his heavenly beams, my mind would need no other recreation, and I should as little relish carnal pleasures, as carnal minds do relish the heavenly delights. As earthly things are poor and low, so is the knowledge of them. As things spiritual and heavenly are high and glorious, mysterious and profound, the knowledge of them is accordingly delightful. "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached to the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory;" 1 Tim. iii. 16. "Faith is the evidence of things not seen;" Heb. xi. 1. It is far more pleasant by faith to see the Lord, than to see any creature by the eye of flesh; and sweeter by faith to see heaven opened, and there behold our glorified Lord, than to see a horse-race, or stage-play, or any of the fooleries of the world.

2. The knowledge of things to come is specially desired,

and godliness containeth that faith which knoweth things to come. How glad would men be to be told what shall befall them to the last hour of their lives ! The woman of Samaria (John iv.) called out her neighbours with admiration to see Christ, as one that had told her all that she had done. But if he had told her all that ever she would do, for the time to come, and all that ever should befall her, it might have astonished her much more. Believers know what hath been, even before the world was made, and how it was made, and what hath been since then, and they know what will be to all eternity. A true believer knows from Scripture, whither men's souls go after death, and how their bodies shall be raised again, and how Christ will come to judge the world, and who shall then be justified, and who shall be condemned ; and what shall be the case of the godly and the ungodly to all eternity. And is it not more pleasure to know these things, than to possess all the vain delights of the earth ? Can the flesh afford you any thing so delightful ?

3. Especially, it is desirable and pleasant to know those things that most concern us. Needless speculations and curiosities we can spare. There is a knowledge that brings more pain than pleasure ; yea, there is a knowledge that will torment. But to know our own affairs, our greatest and most necessary affairs ; to know our threatened misery to prevent it, and to know our offered happiness to attain it ; to know our portion, our honour, our God, what can be more pleasant to the mind of man ! Other men's matters we can pass by. But to know such things concerning our own souls as what we must be and do for ever, and what course we must take to be everlastingly happy, must needs be a feast to the mind of a wise man. Ask but a soul that is haunted with temptations to unbelief, whether any thing would be more welcome to him, than the clear and satisfying apprehensions of a lively faith ? Ask one that lieth in tears and groans, through the feeling of their sin, and the fears of the wrath of God, and doubtings of his love, whether the satisfying knowledge of pardon and reconciliation, and divine acceptance, would not be more pleasant to them, than any of your merriments can be to you ? Ask that poor soul that hath lost the apprehension of his evidences of grace, and walks in darkness, and hath no light, that seeks, and cries, and perceives no hearing whether the discovery of his evidences,

the assurance that his prayers are accepted, and the light of God's countenance shining on him, would not be better to him than any recreation, or any pleasure the earth affords? Ask any man at the hour of death, that is not a block, Whether now the knowledge of his salvation would not be better and more pleasant to him, than all the lust, or sport, or honours of the world.

4. The knowledge of the best and most joyful matters must be the best and most pleasant knowledge. And nothing can be better than God and glory. Nothing can be sweeter than salvation; and therefore this must be the sweetest knowledge. I had rather have the pleasure of one hour's clear and lively knowledge of my salvation, and of the special love of God, than to be exalted above the greatest prince, and to have all the pleasures that my senses can desire. The delights of the flesh are base and brutish, and nothing to the spiritual, heavenly delights of the renewed mind.

5. The manner of our holy knowledge maketh it more delightful. 1. It is a certain and infallible knowledge. It is not a 'may be,' or bare possibility. It is not, 'It is possible there may be a heaven and happiness hereafter.' But it is as true as the word of God is true. We have his own hand, and seal, and earnest for it. Even his precious promises, and oath, confirmed by miracles, and fulfilled prophecy, and bearing his own image and superscription, and shining to us by its own light. We have in our hearts the spirit which is God's earnest, by which we are sealed up to the day of our final full redemption. And if the soul yet stagger at the promise of God through the remnants of unbelief, that shall not make the promise of God of none effect; but his foundation shall still stand sure. His word shall not pass till all be fulfilled, though heaven and earth shall pass away. A message by one that were sent to us from the dead, were not more credible than the word of God. And this certainty of holy faith and knowledge is a very great contentment to the soul. When the glory of the saints is a thing as sure as if we saw it with our eyes, and as sure as these things which we daily see, it is a great pleasure to the soul, when it can but apprehend this joyful certainty.

2. And that there is a certain easiness and plainness in the great and necessary points of faith, as to the manner of revelation, doth add much to Faith's satisfaction and delight.

The points that life and death lie on, are not left so obscure as might perplex us, lest we did not know the meaning of them. But they are so plain, that he that runs may read them; and the simple, that are but honesthearted, may certainly understand them. Which quiets, and pleaseth, and satisfies the mind.

3. And yet there is an exciting difficulty in many things, that are offered to our knowledge, which doth but make our holy studies the more delightful. If the word of God were so plain and obvious to all, that it might be all understood at the first reading, the plainness would bring our sacred knowledge into contempt, as being an easy, common thing. Things common and easily got are little set by. But when the plainness is such as may prevent our despair and dissatisfaction, and yet the difficulty such, that it may hold us in study, and prevent our contempt, it makes the most delightful knowledge. It is pleasant to find some daily addition to our light, and to be on the gaining and thriving hand, and this upon our diligent search. Successes are as pleasant as a present fulness of supplies. The daily blessing of God upon our studies, and humble learning, addeth to our delight. So that all this set together, may shew you how pleasant a thing it is to have the knowledge of a saint.

Especially if you add that he hath an experimental, and so a sweeter knowledge than the most learned men have that are ungodly. He hath tasted that the Lord is gracious, and he hath tasted the sweetness of his love, and of all the riches of his grace in Christ, and of his full and precious promises, and of the inward powerful workings of his spirit. His experimental knowledge is the most delightful knowledge.

The pleasure of natural knowledge is great, but the pleasure of saving knowledge is much greater. I do not believe that ever any of the ambitious troublers of the world, that let go heaven that they may rule on earth, have half the pleasure in their greatness and usurped dignities, as an honest student hath in his book, and studious exercises and successes. But if you compare the pleasures of their greatness and commands with the pleasure of a true believing soul, in his life of faith, and sweet forethoughts of his heavenly inheritance, I must plainly tell you that we disdain the comparison. Again I say, that if you will compare the drunkard's, the fornicator's, or the ambitious or covetous man's delight, with

the solace that I find in my retired studies, even about natural common things, I disdain the comparison. But if you compare their pleasure with that little, alas too little pleasure that I find in the believing thoughts of life eternal, I do not only disdain your comparison, but detest it.

Were I minded to be long, I would shew you from these twelve particular instances, the abundant pleasure of holy knowledge.

1. What a pleasant thing it is to know the Lord, the eternal God, in his blessed attributes ! The most dim, glimmering knowledge of God is better than the clearest knowledge of all the mysteries of nature.

2. How pleasant is it to know the works of his creation ! How, and why, and when he made the world, and all that is therein !

3. How pleasant is it to know the blessed Son of God, and to behold the face of his Father's love that is revealed in him as his fullest image !

4. How pleasant is it to know the law and Gospel, the matter and the method, the literal and spiritual sense ; to see there the mind and will of God, and to see our charter for the heavenly inheritance ; and read the precepts, and the promises, and the examples of the faith and patience of the saints !

5. How pleasant is it to know the heavenly operations of the Holy Ghost, and the nature and action of his several graces, and the uses of every one of them to our souls ; and especially to find them in ourselves, and to be skilled in using them !

6. How pleasant is it to know the nature and frame of the church of Christ which is his body, and to know the difference and use of the several members ! To understand the office of the ministry, and why Christ hath set them in the church, and how much love he hath manifested therein ; that they should preach to us, and offer us reconciliation in his name and stead (2 Cor. v. 19.), and marry us unto Christ in baptism, receiving us in his name into the church and holy covenant ; and that in his name and stead they should deliver us his body and blood, and absolve the penitent sinner from his sins, and deliver him a sealed pardon, and receive the returning, humbled soul into the church of Christ, and communion of his saints.

7. How pleasant is it to know the nature and use of all Christ's ordinances. The excellencies of his holy word ; the use of baptism, and the refreshing, strengthening use of the supper of the Lord ; the use and benefit of holy prayer, and praises, and thanksgiving, and church order, and all parts of the communion of the saints !

8. Yea, there is a holy pleasure in knowing our very sin and folly. When God bringeth a sinner to himself, though his sin be odious to him, yet to know the sin is pleasant ; and therefore he prayeth that God would shew him the bottom of his heart, and the most secret or odious of his sins.

9. And it is pleasant to a Christian to know his duty. It very much quieteth and delighteth his mind, when he can but know what is the will of God. When the way of duty is plain before him, how cheerfully can he go on, whatever meets him ! and how easy doth it make his labour and his suffering !

10. Yea, it is pleasant to a believer to understand his very danger. Though the danger itself be dreadful to him, yet to know it, that he may avoid it, is his desire, and his delight.

11. And how pleasant is it to understand all the helps, encouragements, and comforts, that God hath provided for us, in our way ! and how many more are for us, than against us !

12. But above all, how pleasant is it to know by faith, the life that we must live with God for ever, and what he will do for us to all eternity, in the performance of his holy covenant !

I do but briefly name these instances of delightful knowledge, which are sweeter to the holy soul than all the pleasures of sin to the ungodly. Do you think that any of you hath such solid pleasure in your sins, as David had in the law of God, when he meditated in it with such delight, and faith. "How sweet is it to my mouth ! even sweeter than the honey and the honeycomb." Surely you dare not compare with him in pleasures.

II. Another part of holiness that is pleasant in the nature of it, is that which is subjected in the heart and affections. And here is the chiefest of its sweetness and delights.

1. The very compliance of the will with the will of God,

and its conformity to his law, doth carry a quieting pleasure in it. That soul is most happy that is nearest God, and most like him ; and that soul may well be fullest of delights that is most happy. And that soul is nearest and most like unto God, whose will is most conformed to his will. The trouble of the heart is its unsettledness, when it is not bottomed on the will of God. When we feel that God's will doth rule and satisfy us, and that we would fain be what he would have us be, and rest in his disposing will, as well as obey his commanding will, this gives abundant pleasure and quietness to the soul.

2. The holy workings of charity in the soul, are exceedingly pleasant. All the acts of love to God and man are very sweet. This is the holy work, that is its wages.

-1. The love of God is so sweet an exercise, that verily, my soul had rather be employed in it with sense and vigour, than to be lord of all the earth. O could I but be taken up with the love of God, how easily could I spare the pleasure of the flesh ! Might I but see the loveliness of my dear Creator, with a clearer view, and see his glory in his noble works ; might I but see and feel that saving love which he hath manifested in the Redeemer, till my soul were ravished and filled with his love, how little should I care who had the pleasures of this deceitful world ! Had I more of that blessed Spirit of adoption, and more of those filial affections to my heavenly Father, which his unutterable love bespeaks ; and were I more sensible of his abundant mercy, and did my soul but breathe and long after him more earnestly, I would pity the miserable tyrants of the world, that are worse than beggars while they domineer, and taste not of that kingdom of love and pleasure that dwelleth in my breast. All the pleasures of the world are the laughing of a madman, or the sports of a child, or the dreams of a sick man, in comparison of the pleasures of the love of God.

2. And the love of holiness, the image of God hath its degree of pleasure. And so hath the love of the holy servants of the Lord. There is a sweetness in the soul in its goings out after any holy object, in spiritual love. Yea, more, our very common love of men, and our love of enemies, hath its proportion of pleasure, far better than the sensual pleasure of the ungodly. To feel so much of the operations of grace, and to answer our holy pattern, in loving

them that hate us, doth give much ease and pleasure to the mind. The exercises of love to God and man, and that for his sake, are the exceeding pleasure of a gracious soul.

And here by the way, you may take notice of one reason why hypocrites and ungodly men find no such sweetness in the exercises of religion ; because they let alone the inward pleasant work of love, which is the soul and life of outward duty. This inward work is the pleasant work ; while they are strangers unto this, their outward duties will be but a toil, and seem a drudgery or a wearisome employment.

3. There is a pleasure even in holy desires : when a Christian feeleth his heart enlarged, in longing after the welfare of the church and the good of others. Though the absence of the thing desired be a trouble, yet the exercise of a holy desire (which is an act of love) is pleasant to us. If the lustful have a pleasure in their vile desire, and the ambitious and the covetous have a pleasure in their vain and delusory desires, the wise, well-guided desires of a true believer must needs be pleasant.

4. Especially when desire is accompanied with hope. All the pleasures of this world are far short of affording that rest and quiet to the soul, as the hope of glory doth to the believer. O happy soul that is acquainted by experience, with the lively hopes of the everlasting happiness ! It is not the hope of corruptible riches, nor of a fading inheritance, but of the crown that fadeth not, and of the precious, certain durable treasure ! It is not a hope in the promise of deceitful man, but in the word of the everlasting God ! The soul that hath this anchor, needs not be tossed with those fears and cares, and anxieties of mind, that worldly men are subject to. This hope will never make them ashamed. If a man were in a consumption, or sentenced to death, would not the hopes of life, upon certain grounds, be more pleasant to him, than sport or mirth, or lustful objects, or any such present sensitive delights ? Much more if, with the hopes of life, he had the hopes of all the felicities of life, and of the perpetuity of all these. O may I but be enabled by faith to lift up the eye of my soul to God, and view the everlasting mansions, and by hope to take possession of them, and say, All this is mine in title, even upon the promise of the faithful God ! What greater pleasure can my soul possess, till it enter on the full possession of those eternal pleasures ! O poor

deluded, worldly men! What is the pleasure of your wealth to this? O brutish sinners! What is the pleasure of your mirth and jollity, your meat and drink, your pride and bravery, your lust and filthiness, in comparison of this? O poor ambitious, dreaming men, that make such a stir for the honour and greatness of this world! What is the pleasure of your idol-honour, and short vainglory in comparison of this? While you have it, you have no hope of keeping it; you are troubled with the thought of leaving it. Had we no higher hopes than yours, how miserable should we be!

5. The trust and repose of the soul on God, which is another part of the life of grace, is exceeding pleasant and quieting to the soul. To find that we stand upon a rock, and that under us are the everlasting arms, and that we have so full security for our salvation as the promise and oath of the immutable God, what a stay, what a pleasure is this to the believer! The troubles of the godly are most from the remnants of their unbelief. The more they believe, the more they are comforted and established. The life of faith is a pleasant life. Faith could not conquer so many enemies, and carry us through so much suffering and distress, as you find in that cloud of testimonies, Heb. xi. if it were not a very comfortable work. Even we that see not the salvation ready to be revealed, may yet greatly rejoice, for all the manifold temptations, that for a season make us subject to some heaviness; 1 Pet. i. 5, 6. And we “that see not Jesus Christ, yet believing can love him, and rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory;” ver. 8. The God of hope doth sometimes “fill his servants with all joy and peace in believing, and makes them even abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost;” Rom. xv. 13.

6. Yea, joy is itself a part of the holy qualification of the saints, and of the renewed state that grace hath brought them into. “For the kingdom of God as it consisteth in righteousness, so in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost;” Rom. xiv. 17. Believers “receive not the spirit of bondage again to fear;” that is, they are not under the bondage of the law, nor have the spirit or state of mind which is suited to those legal impositions and terrible comminations, but they “have received the Spirit of adoption by which they cry, Abba, Father;” that is, as they are brought under a more gracious dispensation, and a better covenant and promises, and God

is revealed to them in the Gospel as a reconciled father through his Son, so doth he treat them more gently as reconciled children, and the Spirit which answereth this gracious covenant, and is given us thereupon, doth qualify us with a childlike disposition, and cause us, with boldness, love and confidence, to call God Father, and fly to him for succour and supply in all our dangers and necessities. And how pleasant it must be to a believing soul, to have this Spirit of adoption, this childlike love and confidence, and freedom with the Lord, methinks you might conjecture though it is sensibly known by them only that enjoy it. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, &c. (Gal. v. 22.), when the word is first received by believers, though it may be in much affliction, through the persecutions and cross that attend the Gospel, yet is it ordinarily "in the joy of the Holy Ghost; 1 Thess. i. 6. The Holy Ghost is the comforter of true believers. And if he have taken it upon him as his work, he will surely do it, in the degree and season fittest for them. And if joy itself be part of the state of grace and holiness, you may see that it is the most delightful, pleasant course.

7. Yea, that we may have a pleasant and comfortable life, the Lord hath forbidden our distracting cares, and fears, and doubts, and our inordinate sorrows; and commanded us to cast our care on him, and promised to care for us (1 Pet. v. 7.); and he hath bid us "be careful for nothing, but in all things make our wants known to him;" Phil. iv. 6. And can there be a course of life more pleasant than that which doth consist in faith, and love, and hope, and joy, that is built on God, and animated by him, and that excludeth inordinate cares and sorrows, as health doth sickness? Where it is unlawful to be miserable and to grieve ourselves, and no sorrow is allowed us, but that which tendeth to our joy; where it is made our work to "rejoice in the Lord, yea always to rejoice;" ver. 4. A servant or tradesman will judge of the pleasure of his life by his work. If his work be drudgery, his life is tedious and filled with grief. If his work be pleasant, his life is pleasant. Judge then by this of a holy life. Is it care, and fear, and anguish of mind that God commandeth you? No; it is these that he forbiddeth. "Care not: Fear not," are his injunctions; Isa. xxv. 4. xli. 10. Do you fear reproach? Why, you do it contrary to the will of God, who biddeth you "Fear not the reproach of men;" Isa.

li. 7. Do you fear the power and rage of enemies? Why, it is contrary to your religion so to do. God biddeth you "fear them not;" chap. xliii. 5. 13, 14. xliv. 2. 8. Do you fear persecution or death from the hands of cruel violence? Why, it is contrary to the will of God that you do so. "Fear not them which kill the body," &c. Matt. x. 26. 28. 31. O blessed life! where all that is against us is forbidden, and all that is truly joyous, and delightful, and necessary to make us happy is commanded us, and made our duty; which is contrary to misery, as life to death, and as light to darkness. Come hither, poor deluded sinners that fly from care, and fear, and sorrow. If you will but give up yourselves to Christ, you shall be exempted from all these, except such as is necessary to your joy. You may do any thing, if you will be the servants of the Lord, except that which tendeth to your own and other men's calamity. Come hither, all you that call for pleasure, and love no life but a life of mirth. Let God be your master, and holiness your work, and pleasure then shall be your business, and holy mirth shall be your employment. While you serve the flesh, your pleasure is small, and your trouble great; vexation is your work, and unspeakable vexation is your wages. But if you will be the hearty servants of the Lord, rejoicing shall be your work and wages. If you understand not this, peruse your lesson, Psal. xxxiii. 1. "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous, for praise is comely for the upright." "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness;" Psal. xcvi. 11, 12. "Let all those that trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee;" Phil. iii. 1. Psal. v. 11. "Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice ye righteous, and shout for joy all ye that are upright in heart;" Psal. xxxii. 11. "Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness, and let thy saints shout for joy;" Psal. cxxxii. 9. 16. "I will also clothe her priests with salvation, and his saints shall shout aloud for joy;" Psal. xvi. Such precepts and promises abound in Scripture, which tell you if you will be saints indeed, that joy and gladness must be your life and work. I know objections will be stirring in your minds. But forbear them but a while, and I shall fully answer them anon.

2. I have told you wherein the inward part of holiness is delightful. I shall briefly shew you that the outward part also is very pleasant, and fit to feed these inward joys. And 1. Let us view the duties that are more directly to be performed unto God. And 2. The works of charity and righteousness unto men.

1. How sweet is it to be exercised in the word of God ! In hearing or reading it with serious meditation ! For the man that hath been revived by it, renewed, sanctified, saved by it, to hear that powerful, heavenly truth, by which his soul was thus made new ! For the soul that is in love with God to hear or see his blessed name on every leaf ! To read his will, and find the expressions of his love, his great, eternal, wondrous love ; how sweet this is, experience tells the saints that feel it. If you that feel no sweetness in it, believe not them that say they feel it, at least believe the word of God, and the professions of his ancient saints. “ O how I love thy law ! it is my meditation all the day. How sweet are thy words unto my taste ! yea, sweeter than the honey, and the honeycomb. I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies as in all riches. I will delight myself in thy statutes : I will not forget thy word. Thy testimonies are my delight and my counsellors. I will delight myself in thy commandments which I have loved, and I will meditate in thy statutes. The law of thy mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver. Unless thy law had been my delight, I had perished in my affliction. I will never forget thy precepts, for with them thou hast quickened me. Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever : for they are the rejoicing of my heart. I love thy commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold. I rejoice at thy word as one that findeth great spoil. Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them ;” Psal. cxix. 14. 16. 24. 47. 72. 92. 93. 97. 103. 111. 117. 162. 165.

I should but weary you to recite one quarter of the expressions of holy men in Scripture concerning the sweetness and pleasures which they found in the law of God. In a word, it is the work and marks of the blessed man, that “ his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night ; Psal. i. 1, 2. Do you think that an unpleasant, tedious life that doth consist in such employment ?

2. Another holy duty is prayer, both secret and with others; in families, and public assemblies. And do you think it is a grievous, tedious work for a needy soul to beg of God, that is so ready to relieve him? For a guilty soul to pray to God that is so ready to forgive him? For a sinful soul to return to God (and confess his sins, and beg for mercy), that is so ready to meet him and entertain him? For a loving soul to converse with God, when there is a mutual complacency between them? Is it grievous for a child to speak to his Father? or are you weary of the presence of your dearest friend? What is there in holy prayer that should grieve or weary us? Sure it is not his company that we speak to. For it is his presence that makes heaven. And sure it is not the employment. For it is but asking, and asking for the best and choicest thing, and asking in our necessities for that which we must have, or we are undone for ever. And is it unpleasant to pray to a bounteous God, in our necessity, and that for the best and most pleasant things? Perhaps there may be some of you that think it is but labour lost, and that you could better spend those hours, and that God regardeth not our prayers, and that indeed we speed never the better for them, and therefore you have no pleasure in them. And no wonder! If you are atheists and believe not that there is a God, you cannot love him, or rejoice in him. If you believe not his promises, how should they give you any comfort? If you believe not that he regardeth prayers, no wonder if you have no heart to pray. They that say, "It is vain to serve the Lord, and it is no profit to us to keep his ordinances" (Mal. iii. 14.), will also say, "What a weariness is it;" chap. i. 13.; and will give him but a lame and lifeless service. If you did believe your friend to be your enemy, you would have small pleasure in him. Misconceits may easily make you loathe the things that are most delightful. The thoughts of heaven itself yield little pleasure to them that believe not that there is a heaven, or what it is. The light is not pleasant to the blind; nor any object of our talk or smell to those that have lost these senses. Is music unpleasant because it delighteth not the deaf? For shame do not charge the sweet and blessed ways of God with that which is the fruit of your own corruption. If your lungs be rotten, you may be out of breath with speaking the most delightful words, or walking in the most pleasant fields or

gardens. But the cause of the weariness is within you. If you have the hearts of infidels, or graceless, stupid, worldly sinners, you are so unfit to approach the Most Holy God in holy prayer, that I marvel not if you go to it as a bear to the stake, as an ox to the yoke, or as an offender to the stocks. For the God that you pray to, is a hater of all the workers of iniquity, and a consuming fire ; and therefore no wonder if his terrors should meet you, and leave you but little delight in prayer. (Though it is wonder that they do not follow you, and meet you in all your ways, and leave you less delight in the omission of it.) But if you had the hearts of believing, holy men, and had tasted in prayer what they have tasted, and had their experience of the success, you would then be easily persuaded that prayer is neither a vain nor an unpleasant work. Surely it is not unpleasant to a burdened soul to disburden itself before the Lord ; [nor to a sinner that hath felt the weight, the smart, the sting of sin, to cry for mercy, and healing to him that is able and willing to shew mercy ; nor is it unpleasant for him that knows the worth of grace and glory, to lie upon his knees in begging them of the Lord. All those that have felt how good it is to draw near to God, had rather have leave to pray in hope, than to please their senses with any delights that earth affordeth. There is force in prayer (through the grace that hath appointed and doth accompany it) to procure comfort to the distressed mind, and safety to them that are in danger ; relief to them that are in want, and strength to them that are in weakness. Prayer is good for all things that are good ; and good against all things that are evil. It is good against temptations, dangers, enemies, and sin. It is good against sorrows, fears, and cares ; yea, against poverty, shame, and sickness. For the God that prayer goes to, and makes use of, is sufficient against all, and our only help. Turn away now from God if you dare, and cast off earnest, constant prayer, as if it were a tedious, unpleasant thing ; but be sure the time is coming when thou, even thou that thus despisest it, wilt betake thyself to prayer, and cry, Lord, Lord, when it is too late, or when anguish and terror seize upon thee. Sickuess and death, and the terrors of the Lord will teach thee to pray, as useless and tedious as now you think it. Yea, and teach you to do it earnestly, that now put off all with a few frozen, heartless words. But O it is sea-

sonable believing prayer that is comfortable : it is the prayer of faith, and love, and hope that is pleasant : but the prayer of too late repentance in hell, and the prayer of despair and horror, that cannot procure a drop of water, afford no pleasure, as they procure no relief.

3. Another duty that holiness consisteth in, is thanksgiving and praise to the God of our salvation. He that knows not that this work is pleasant, is unacquainted with it. If there be any thing pleasant in this world, it is the praises of God, that flow from a believing, loving, soul, that is full of the sense of the mercies, and goodness, and excellencies of the Lord ; especially the unanimous conjunction of such souls, in the high praises of God in the holy assemblies. Is it not pleasant even to name the Lord ? to mention his attributes ? to remember his great and wondrous works ? to magnify him that rideth on the heavens, that dwelleth in the light that cannot be approached, that is clothed with majesty and glory, that infinitely surpasseth the sun in its brightness ; that hath his throne in the heavens, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain him ; and yet he delighteth in the humble soul, and hath respect to the contrite ; yea, dwells with them that tremble at his word ? Is any thing so pleasant as the praises of the Lord ? How sweet is it to see and praise him as the Creator, in the various wonderful creatures which he hath made ! How pleasant to observe his works of providence, to them that read them by the light of the sanctuary, and in faith and patience learn the interpretation from him that only can interpret them ! But O how unspeakably pleasant is it to see the Father in the Son, and the Godhead in the manhood of our Lord, and the riches of grace in the glass of the holy Gospel, and the manifold wisdom of God in the church, where the angels themselves disdain not to behold it ! Eph. iii. 10, 11. The praising of God for the incarnation of his Son, was a work that a choir of angels were employed in as the instructors of the church : Luke ii. 13, 14. There is not a promise in the book of God, nor one passage of the life and miracles of Christ, and the rest of the history of the Gospel, nor one of the holy works of the Spirit upon the soul, nor one of those thousand mercies to the church, or to ourselves or friends, that infinite goodness doth bestow, but contain such matter of praise to God, as might fill believing hearts with pleasure,

and find them most delightful work : much more when all these are at once before us, what a feast is there for a gracious soul !

O you befooled fleshly minds, that find no pleasure in the things of God, but had rather be drinking, or gaming, or scraping in the world, awaken your souls, and see what you are doing ! With what eyes do you see, with what hearts do you think of the works, and word, and ways of God, and of the holy employments that you are so much against ? For my own part, I freely and truly here profess to you, that I would not exchange the pleasure that my soul enjoyeth in this one piece of the holy work of God, for all your mirth, and sport, and gain, and whatever the world and sin affords you : I would not change the delights which I enjoy, in one of these holy days and duties, in the mentioning of the eternal God, and celebrating his praise, and magnifying his name, and thinking and speaking of the riches of his love, and the glory of his kingdom, no, not for all the pleasure of your lives. O that your souls were cured of all those dangerous diseases, that make you loathe the sweetest things ! You would then know what it is that you have set light by, and would marvel at yourselves, that you could taste no sweetness in the sweetest things ! Can you think that your work or your play, your profits or your sports, are comparable for pleasure to the praises of the Lord ? If grace had made you competent judges, I am sure you would say there is no comparison. Hear but the testimony of a holy soul, yea, of the Spirit of God by him. " Praise ye the Lord ; for it is good to sing praises to our God : for it is pleasant, and praise is comely ;" Psal. cxlvii. 1. " Praise ye the Lord : sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints. Let Israel rejoice in him that made him ; let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people : he will beautify the meek with salvation. Let the saints be joyful in glory : let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, &c. ;" Psal. cxlix. 1, 2. 4—6. " O come let us sing unto the Lord ; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise to him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods ;" Psal. xcv. 1—3. " O sing unto the

Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord all the earth. Sing unto the Lord; bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people: for the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised—Honour and majesty are before him, strength and beauty are in his sanctuary;" Psal. xcvi. 1—4. 6. Did not this holy prophet find it a pleasant work to praise the Lord? Yea all that love the name of God should be joyful in him; Psal. v. 11. Every one of his upright ones may say with the prophet, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord: my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robes of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels. For as the earth springs forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations;" Isa. lxi. 10, 11. It is a promise of joy that is made in Isa. lvi. 6—8. "To the sons of the stranger that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer." What a joyful thing is it to a gracious soul, when he may see the reconciled face of God, and feel his fatherly reviving love, and among his saints may speak his praise, and proclaim his great and blessed name, even in his temple, "where every man speaketh of his glory!" Psal. xxix. 9. If the proud are delighted in their own praise, how much more will the humble soul be delighted in the praise of God! When the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, and faith doth set us as before his throne, or at least doth somewhat withdraw the veil, and shew us him that lives for ever; and when the force of love doth open our lips, that our mouths may shew forth his praise, it is pleasant both to God and us. The Lord himself doth put on joy, as delighting in his people's praise, and when they join obedience with holy worship, they are pleasant in his eyes; Jer. ii. 24. Isa. xlii. 1. lxii. 4. Zeph. iii. 17. "He meeteth him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, and that remembers him in his ways;" Isa. lxiv. 5. Would you taste the sweetest life on

earth? Learn then to delight yourselves in God. Do you want recreation? Be acquainted with his praise. Is there not a better cure for melancholy here among the servants of the Lord, than in an alehouse, or in the company of transgressors? Their carnal pleasures are unwholesome for you, like luscious fruits that will make you sick. But the delights of faith are safe and healthful. Fleshly pleasure is windy and deceitful, and weakeneth and befools the soul: but the joy of the Lord is our strength; Neh. viii. 10. A little may be too much of fleshly pleasures; and it is of very hard digestion, and leaves that behind that spoils the sport: but the further you go in the delights of faith, the better they are, and the sweeter you will find them. You may quickly catch a dangerous surfeit of your fleshly pleasures; but of spiritual delights, the more the better; for they are curing, reviving, and much confirm and exalt the soul. Our spiritual pleasures are so heavenly, and have so much of God and glory in them, that they must needs prepare the soul for heaven, and be excellent helps to our salvation.

O therefore, if you would live a pleasant life, draw near to God, and by faith behold him, and by love adhere to him, and take a view of his infinite goodness and all his perfections, and behold him in his wondrous works, and then break forth into his cheerful praises, and you shall taste such pleasures as the earth affordeth not. Launch forth into the boundless ocean of eternity, and let your hearts and tongues expatiate in the praise of the heavenly majesty, and use this work, and ply it close, and be not too seldom, or customary, or careless in it, and you shall find the difference between the pleasures of faith and of the flesh, of a holy and of a sensual life. "Ye that stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God, praise the Lord; for the Lord is good: sing praises to his name, for it is pleasant;" Psal. cxxxv. 2, 3. "Let my mouth be filled with thy praise, and with thy honour all the day;" Psal. lxxi. 8. "Sing unto the Lord: bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day. Honour and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary;" Psal. xcvi. 2, 6.

O that the Lord will but shine upon my soul with the light of his countenance, and open my heart to the entertainment of his love, and hold a gracious communion with my soul, by his Holy Spirit, and keep open these doors to

me, and continue this liberty of his house and ordinances which we enjoy this day, that I may join with a faithful, humble people, in holy communion, and in his praise and worship, and that with a heart that is suitable to these works! I shall then say with David, "the lines are fallen to me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage;" Psal. xvi. 6. I will ask for no greater pleasures, or honours, or advancement in this world! Let who will surfeit on the pleasures of the flesh; here doth my soul delight to dwell! "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his holy temple. For in the time of trouble he will hide me in his pavilion; and in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me: he shall set me up upon a rock. And then shall my head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy, I will sing, yea, I will sing praises to the Lord;" Psal. xxvii. 4—6. Till I come to the promised everlasting pleasures, I shall ask of God no greater pleasures. These would be as much as my soul in the prison of flesh can bear. Till I come to the land of promise, may I but have these clusters of its grapes in my present wilderness, I shall not repine: "My heart here shall be glad, and my glory shall rejoice, and at death my flesh shall rest in hope." For as the Lord now sheweth me the "path of life," so in his "presence is fulness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for evermore;" Psal. xvi. 9. 11.

4. Another pleasant holy duty, is our holy communion with Christ and his church in the Lord's supper.

This is a holy feast that is purposely provided by the King of saints for the entertainment of his family, for the refreshing of the weary, and the making glad the mournful soul. The night before his bitter death, he instituted this sacramental feast! He caused his disciples to sit down with him, and when they had partaken of the passover, the sacrament of promise, and had their taste of the old wine, he giveth them of the new, even the sacrament of the better covenant, and of the fuller Gospel grace. He teacheth them that his death is life to them; and that which is his bitterest suffering, is their feast; and his sorrows are their joys, as our sinful pleasures were his sorrows. The slain Lamb of

God our passover that was sacrificed for us, that taketh away the sins of the world, was the pleasant food which sacramentally he himself then delivered to them, and substantially the next day offered for them. "The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. He is "the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that he giveth is his flesh, which he hath given for the life of the world. Except we eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, we have no life in us. Whoso eateth his flesh and drinketh his blood, hath eternal life, and he will raise him up at the last day. For his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed. He that eateth his flesh and drinketh his blood, dwelleth in Christ, and Christ in him. As the living Father hath sent the Son, and he liveth by the Father, so he that eateth him, shall live by him. This is that bread that came down from heaven: not as the fathers did eat manna and are dead: he that eateth this bread shall live for ever;" John vi. 33. 50, 51. 53—58.

I know that to an unbelieving, carnal wretch, the sacrament is but a common thing. For Christ himself and his Gospel is no better in his eyes. He discerneth not the Lord's body: he only quieteth and deludeth his conscience with the outward form. He hath not faith to feed on Christ. But to a lively faith, what sweetness doth such a feast afford!

We have here communion with the blessed Trinity, in the three parts of this eucharistical sacrament! As the Father is both our Creator and the offended majesty, and yet he hath sent his Son to be our Redeemer; so in the first part, which is the CONSECRATION, we present to our Creator the creatures of bread and wine, acknowledging that from him we receive them and all, and we desire that upon our dedication, by his acceptance they may be made sacramentally and representatively the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

In the second part of the eucharist, which is the COMMEMORATION of the sacrifice offered on the cross, we break the bread and pour forth the wine, to represent the breaking of Christ's body, and shedding of his blood for the sin of man; and we beseech the Father to be reconciled to us on his Son's account, and to accept us in his beloved, and to accept all our sacrifices through him. So that as Christ now in heaven is representing his sacrifice to the Father, which

he once offered on the cross for sin, so must the minister of Christ represent and plead to the Father the same sacrifice, by the way of commemoration, and such intercession as belongeth to his office.

The third part of the eucharist is the OFFER and PARTICIPATION; in which the minister representing Christ, doth by commission deliver his body and blood to the penitent, hungry, believing soul: and with Christ is delivered a sealed pardon of all sin, and a sealed gift of life eternal. All which are received by the true believer.

An unbeliever knoweth not what transactions there are between the Lord and a holy soul in this ordinance, where the appearances are so small. A bit of bread and a sup of wine are indeed small matters: but so is not this communion with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. What a comfort is it that the offended majesty will accept a sacrifice at our hands, and enter a treaty of peace with the offenders! Yea, that he will provide the sacrifice himself, and the most precious in the whole world; that he will signify this his acceptance of the sacrifice, and how he is pleased in his well-beloved Son; and that he accepteth his Son's intercession in the heavens, and his ministers' intercession, and his church's prayers on earth through Christ! Seeing Christ must be glorified with his Father, and not continue visible among us, what could we desire more from him, than the threefold representative which he hath left behind him, to supply the room of his bodily presence? Even the representation of himself by the sacrament, by his ministers, and by the Holy Ghost, which is his substitute within for the efficacy of all. O what unspeakable mysteries and treasures of mercy are here presented to us in a sacrament! Here we have communion with a reconciled God, and are brought into his presence by the great Reconciler. Here we have communion with our blessed Redeemer, as crucified, and glorified, and offered to us, as our quickening, preserving, strengthening Head. Here we have communion with the Holy Ghost, applying to our souls the benefits of redemption, drawing us to the Son, and communicating light, and life, and strength from him unto us; increasing and actuating his graces in us. Here we have communion with the body of Christ, his sanctified people, the heirs of life. When the minister of Christ by his commission representeth a cruci-

fied Christ to our eyes, by the bread and wine appointed to this use, we see Christ crucified as it were before us, and our faith layeth hold on him, and we perceive the truth of the remedy ; and build our souls upon this rock. When the same minister by Christ's commission, doth offer us his body, and blood, and benefits, it is as firm and valid to us, as if the mouth of Christ himself had offered them. And when our souls receive him, by that faith which the Holy Ghost exciteth in us, the participation is as true as that of our bodies receiving the bread and wine which represent him. O do but ask a drooping soul, that mourns under the fears of God's displeasure, how he would value a voice from heaven, to tell him that all his sins are pardoned, and that he is dear to God, and judge by his answer what is contained and offered in a sacrament ! Ask him how he would take it, if Christ should speak those words himself to him, which he hath given his ministers commission in his name to speak ? " Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you." It is the same Christ, the same pardon and salvation, that is offered us by the messengers of Christ, and which he personally offered himself to his disciples. When you must all appear at the bar of God, O what would you not give for a sealed pardon, which in a sacrament is given freely now, to the believing soul ! Judge now by this whether it be a joyous ordinance ! When the poorest Christian this day receiveth that, which the greatest prince, that is ungodly, would then give all the world for if he had it. For want of that pardon, Christian, which thou must now receive, many thousands will tremble at the bar of God, and be overwhelmed with his wrath for ever ! Ask a soul that groaneth under the languishings of his grace, and the burden of any strong corruption, how he would value the mortifying and quickening grace of the Holy Ghost, that would break his bonds, and give him light, and life, and strength ; and by his answer judge of the value of a sacrament. We have here the greatest mercies in the world, brought down to us in sensible representations, that they might be very near us, and the means might be suited to the frailty and infirmity of our present state.

If the sealed message of God's reconciliation with us, and a sealed pardon of all our sins, and a sealed grant of everlasting life, be not more pleasant and desirable to your

thoughts, than all that earth and flesh can yield you, it is because you are alive to sin, and dead to God, and want that spiritual sense and appetite, by which you might be competent judges. If God, if Christ, if grace, if the foretastes of glory can afford no pleasure to the soul, then heaven itself would not be pleasant. But if these are sweet, the sacrament is sweet that doth convey them.

Well, poor stubborn, carnal sinners! you have been invited to this feast as well as others! we are sent to call you, and even compel you to come in, (though upon the terms and in the way of Christ,) but you have no great list; but somewhat else doth please you better. And will it prove better indeed to you at the end? Well, take your own choice! If an alehouse be better than the table of the Lord; if your merry companions do please you better than the communion of the saints, or if you cannot submit to the order and discipline of the family of Christ, that you may partake of his provision, you may follow your own corrupt desires, and see whither they will lead you! But here it is that I shall choose my pleasures, till I reach the everlasting pleasures. And though in this low communion of imperfect saints, we see but in a glass, and have but some small imperfect tastes of the glorious things which hope expecteth; yet this is more than all that earth and flesh can yield; and it is most pleasure that by these is revealed, sealed, and represented. Sacraments can assure us of perfect joys, though they give us but little joy in hand.

Object. 'But if sacraments be so pleasant, why then (saith a disconsolate soul,) have I found no more pleasure or comfort in them?' *Answ.* Even in the soul that is made alive by grace, diseases may much corrupt the appetite, and make the sweetest thing seem bitter. Are not sacraments sweet to you? and do you not delight in the communion of God and of his saints? I will not say much to you, lest it seem digressive, but briefly ask you these few questions.

Quest. 1. Are the thoughts of God, of Christ, of heaven sweet to you? If they be, methinks the ordinances should be sweet! If they be not, it is no wonder that you set light by sacraments, if you can set light by Christ and heaven itself.

Quest. 2. Is not sin grown sweet to you? If it be, the

ordinances will not be sweet : no, nor unless your sins grow bitter.

Quest. 3. Doth not the world grow sweet to you, and your condition or expectations, and your thriving state, more pleasant to you than heretofore? If so, no wonder if sacraments and all spiritual things, do lose their sweetness.

Quest. 4. Have you been faithful in your preparation, by free confession, true humiliation, strong resolution, hungering and thirsting after Christ, and all this furthered by diligent self-examination? An unprepared soul must blame itself, if it find not the sweetness of the ordinance. The holy appetite and relish, that is necessary to your delight, must be stirred up much in your preparations.

Quest. 5. Are you careful and conscionable, humble and holy in your lives? If you neglect God in your ordinary conversations, and walk not with him on other days, you are unlike to meet him comfortably here. And if you are slight and careless in your ordinary duties, you will find here that God took notice of it.

Quest. 6. Do you faithfully endeavour to exercise faith, repentance, love, and all sacramental graces in the use of the ordinances? You come not to a mere receiving, but to a work. Have your souls been adorned with the wedding garment, and do you come hither for a meeting with the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you see him by faith, and take all that is here represented to you, as if you had seen the things themselves? Do you remember that your Lord is coming, and do you lift up your heads in the expectation of your redemption, and do this in remembrance of him till he come? An idle loitering in God's work is not the way to find the sweetness of it.

Clemens Alexandrinus Strom. lib. i. init. gives it as a reason why every one took his own part of the bread of the sacrament in those times, because man being a free agent must be the chooser or refuser of his own happiness : the Papists on the contrary do but gape, and the priest doth pop the bread into their mouths, (having first persuaded them that it is not bread.) Do you not expect to receive the spiritual benefits, just as the Papists do receive the bread, as if you had nothing to do but gape? As if your presence here were as much as is to be expected from you for your edification!

How can you taste the sweetness that is offered, when you do not exercise your spiritual senses?

Quest. 7. Do you exercise faith, as well as feeling, in judging of the benefit of sacraments? Pardon, and justification, and title to salvation are benefits which in themselves you cannot feel. It is by believing the promise that you must know them. If God have promised a blessing on his ordinance, it is sure to the faithful soul as if we felt it, though perhaps we may seem long without it. Heaven itself which is the principal end of ordinances, will not be attained in this life, and yet the ordinance is not in vain.

Quest. 8. Have you the true understanding of the use of sacraments, of the abundant love that is here set forth, and the freeness and fulness of the promise here sealed? If not, no wonder if you taste not the sweetness, when you know not how to break the shell, that you may feed on the kernel of the ordinances.

Quest. 9. Have you not troubled your own souls, and muddled your comforts by causeless doubts and ignorant scruples, about the gestures, or manner, or persons that you joined with, or some such circumstances as these? If so, no marvel if you lose the comfort.

Quest. 10. Or at least, have you not been negligent in the review, and after improving of the ordinances, and have you not thought that all was done when you had received? Any one of these miscarriages may make this pleasant duty bitter, or at least deprive you of the most of the delight. But if your hearts be suited to the work, and you deprive not yourselves of the offered consolation, you shall find that God deals bountifully with you, and will feast you even with angels' food.

5. The public worship being all thus sweet, how sweet are the Lord's days, these holy seasons that are wholly consecrated to this work? How light is the Christian, that hath this day cast off his worldly cares, and business, and cogitations, and hath set himself apart for God, as if there were no world to mind! On the week-days he doth walk with God! but so that his necessary worldly business doth frequently divert and distract his mind. But what a sweet and happy day is this, when he may strip himself of these distractions, as he doth of his workday coarser clothes, and may wholly apply himself to God? As the bee goes from

flower to flower, labouring at all, but with a pleasant labour, to gather honey, and prepare for winter, so doth the Christian, especially on the Lord's day, employ himself in labour and delight; and the more he laboreth the more is his delight. From prayer he goeth to reading, and to the instructing of his family if he be a superior, or learning if he be an inferior, and have helps. From private worship to public, and from public to private again; and gathering honey (food and sweetness) to his soul from all.

Tell me, you childish, brutish wantons, do you think in your hearts, that you have as much solid joy and pleasure in a play-day, or in your idle games, or in spending the Lord's day in idleness, or sports, as we have in the holy works of God? Do you think our delight is not more than yours? To our shame, but to the praise of God, we must say that we have tried both ways. We know what it is to play away much of the Lord's day, and what it is to employ it in waiting on the Lord. But since we knew the latter, we wish we had never known the former. That is our recreation which is your toil, and that would be our poison, and stocks, and toil, which is your sport and recreation.

6. Another delightful portion of our work, is holy conference with the experienced servants of the Lord. There are many things considerable in holy conference that make it delightful.

1. It is the conference of dearest friends. The special love that all the godly have to one another, doth exceedingly sweeten their communion. The very presence of those that we most dearly love, is a pleasure to us. Much more their sweetest, edifying discourse.

2. Their conference proceedeth from the Spirit of grace, and therefore is gracious, savouring of that Spirit: and all the breathings and manifestations of that blessed Spirit are very acceptable to those that have the Spirit themselves, and so can savour spiritual things.

3. Their conference is about the highest, the most necessary, the most excellent things. About the most blessed God and his several attributes; his will, works of creation, and disposing providence of nature and grace. About the wonderful mysteries of redemption; the person, life, and sufferings of the Redeemer, his offices, and the performance of them, on earth, and in heaven, in his humiliation and his

exaltation ; and of the sweet relations that we and all his church do stand in, to Christ our Head, our Saviour, and Redeemer ; as also about the gracious workings of the Holy Ghost, in first begetting an increase of holiness. To open to each other the powerful workings of that grace that hath raised them above all the creatures, and brought them to a contempt of earthly glory, and set their hearts on the invisible God, and on eternal things, that hath renewed them in the inner man, and made them hate the things they loved, and mortified their oldest, strongest sins, and quickened them in the exercise of every grace ; all this is edifying, sweet discourse to gracious souls.

4. And the rather because it is about the most pertinent affairs. They are things that do so nearly concern us, that we are glad to speak with those that understand them. It is our own case, which we hear our brethren open. They speak our very hearts, as if they had seen them ; because it is the same work of the same Spirit that they describe. Yea when they complain of their infirmities, it is with our complaints, and they tell us of that which we are troubled with ourselves ; and we perceive that we are not singular in our troubles, but that our case is the case of other servants of the Lord.

5. And it is the more pleasant to converse with the godly, because they speak not by hearsay only, but by experience. They tell us of the discoveries that illuminating grace hath made to their own souls ; and of the many evils they have been saved from ; and the communion they have had with God, and the prayers which he hath heard, and the many and great deliverances he hath granted them. They relate their conflicts with temptations, and their conquests ; their strivings against their ancient lusts, and how they have overcome them ; and the sweet refreshings which their souls have had in the exercise of love, and faith, and hope. They can dive into the ocean of mercy, and speak of the abundant kindness of the Lord, and earnestly awaken and invite each other to praise him for his goodness, and to declare his wondrous works for the children of men. They can direct each other in their difficulties, and encourage each other in holy ways, and strengthen one another in holy resolutions, and comfort one another with the same comforts that they themselves have been comforted with by the Lord. And may not our hearts

rejoice and burn within us, while we discourse of such important things as these, in such a serious, experimental, edifying manner? They can discourse together of their meeting before the throne of Christ, and of the blessed converse which they shall have in heaven, with the Lord himself, and with the holy angels, and where they shall be, and what they shall do, to all eternity, in the presence of God, where is fullness of joy, and before him where are the eternal pleasures.

O Christians ! did not your graces languish by your own neglects, and your souls grow out of relish with these spiritual and most excellent things, your speeches of them would be more savoury ; you would be more frequent, lively, and cheerful in your discourse of holy things ; and then your converse would be more edifying and delightful to each other. We shew so little of grace in our conference, that makes it to be but little different from other men's. And (which is the most common case, and very doleful) we most of us remain so ignorant and imprudent, that we mar holy conference by our mixtures of unwise expressions, and disgrace it to others by our injudicious weakness. This is the bane of Christian discourse ; even the want of holy skill and wisdom, and of understanding to speak of the things of God, according to their transcendent worth and weight, as much (and more) than the want of zeal. But if we could discourse of these holy matters aright, with wisdom and with seriousness, how sweet, how fruitful would the company of holy persons be ! We should be still among them, as in the family of God, and should hear that which our souls do most desire to hear ; and we should preach to one another the riches of grace in our familiar discourse ; and souls might be converted by the conference of believers, and not all left to the public ministry. Every man would be a helper to his neighbour. "For the tongue of the just is as choice silver, though the heart of the wicked is little worth : the lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for want of wisdom ;" Prov. x. 20, 21. "The lips of the wise disperse knowledge ;" chap. xv. 7. "Righteous lips are the delight of kings" (chap. xvi. 13.), "and the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning ;" ver. 21. "The lips of knowledge are a precious jewel ;" chap. xx. 15. "A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth, and with the increase of his lips shall he be filled ;" chap. xviii. 20. "The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom,

and his tongue talketh of judgment; the law of his God is in his heart;" Psal. xxxvii. 30, 31.

Tell me, I beseech you, you that can be so merry in an alehouse, or in any vain and idle company, why should you think that it is not to us a far sweeter thing to talk of holy, edifying matters, than it is to you to talk of vanity? Is the subject of your discourse more fit to delight a man of wisdom? Do you talk of better things than God, or of higher things than heaven? Or of things that more nearly concern you, than the matters of everlasting consequence?

When I have heard such people talking and laughing as if they had been the merriest people in the world, I have sometimes hearkened to their discourse, to hear what talk it was that made them so merry; and it hath been nothing but impertinence and folly, like a man's talking in his sleep; enough to make a man's head ach to hear them. I should be quickly tired of their delights. The blowing of the wind, or the falling of the rain, or as Solomon saith, "the crackling of thorns in the fire," hath as much in it to please my ear, and much less to displease it, than such men's discourse.

Go to a company of merry fellows, as you take them, and to a company of serious, godly, prudent people, and secretly write down all the words that you hear from both companies, and read them over together when you come home, and tell me which is the pleasanter discourse. What a hodge-podge of nonsense, impertinence, levity, immodesty, worldliness, pride, and folly shall you find in one, and what savoury, necessary, edifying, encouraging, and comforting speeches will you find you have gathered from the other!

It is far pleasanter to be among the singing birds, the bleating sheep, yea the chattering daws, than these idle, prating, foolish companions. For with the former, you shall have some natural good, without any mixture of sinful evil. But in foolish, prating company, what shall you perceive, but how nature is depraved, how sinners are beside themselves, how satan doth befool them, and how God is forgotten while he is present with them, and they are laughing in the devil's chains, and at the very brink of death and hell! And can a man be merry to hear such mirth as this? It is a sad spectacle to see men laugh in Bedlam; but much more to see them merry in the fetters of their sin, and under the threatenings and wrath of God. Were you but men of right com-

posed minds, I durst refer it to yourselves, whether holy company and discourse be not like to be much pleasanter than yours.

Do you think that the discourse of learned men, about arts and sciences, history, and the like, is not more pleasant than your idle talk? Much more is the holy discourse of saints about the things of their salvation. Whether do you think the company and discourse of Christ, and his prophets and apostles, or of your merry companions, should be the more delightful? Can you for shame say, the latter were the best? Why, you know that Christ, and his prophets and apostles, had no such idle talk as yours. It was holy things that they discoursed of.

Can you for shame say, that you love God above all, and yet have more pleasure in prating over a pot of ale than in speaking reverently of God? Or would you be believed when you say, that your hearts are set on heaven, when you have more delight in talking of any earthly trifle? Well, I shall leave it to your consciences, and to the judgment of any that will speak with reason, whether the holy converse and conference of the godly, be not in itself a more delightful thing than all the merriments, the dotages, and fooleries of the ungodly. If you think not so, it is because your relish and appetite is depraved, the devil hath deluded you, and sin bereaved you of your wits.

III. I have told you of the pleasantness of the duties of holiness, which are to be performed more directly toward God. Let us now consider of the rest of a Christian life. Which consisteth in our duties to be performed towards men. And these are all comprehended in the works of charity and of justice.

1. And certainly the works of charity are delightful. There is not a pleasanter work in the world than to do good. Even proud men find a great delight in the reputation or name of doing good; that they may be accounted the great benefactors of the world, that is, to be as earthly gods among their neighbours, and as the sun is to the lower world, that all may be below them, and live by their influence. This is the top of that prosperity that sinful ambition doth aspire to. And if the name of welldoing be so pleasant to the proud, the conscience of the thing itself should be more pleasant to the upright. Open bounty is the hypocrite's glory; but to

do good in secret is the believer's pleasure, "for their Father which seeth in secret, shall reward them openly:" yea, the very delight of doing good, and especially a great or public good, a spiritual and everlasting good, is a reward unto itself. It is the speech of Christ recited by Paul, Acts xx. 35. that "it is more blessed to give than to receive."

There are many things concurring that make it very pleasant to do good. It proceeds from the power of love; and the exercise of love is pleasant. And love makes our brethren to be to us as ourselves, and consequently their welfare is as our own, and rejoiceth us as if ourselves received all that they receive. And what abundant pleasure then hath a believer! When so many thousands of his brethren do receive so many thousand benefits daily from God himself, and all these are to the Christian, through the union and power of love, as if he had received them all himself. But especially when he himself is the instrument of conveyance. The poor have comfort in receiving of relief; but nothing in comparison of his that gives it, if it be done for the sake of Christ, in uprightness of heart. A poor man receiveth from the giver perhaps but an outward small commodity; but the upright giver receiveth from God the sense of his acceptance, and peace of conscience, with the promise of an everlasting recompence. A mite, or a cup of cold water, given to a prophet in the name of a prophet, or to a disciple in the name of a disciple, shall certainly be rewarded; Matt. x. 40—42.

A true believer is covetous to do good, as others are to receive it, and studieth for opportunities of laying out his gifts and wealth for God, as others study to gather it for themselves. As a worldling studieth for a good bargain, that he may grow rich; a true believer studieth for opportunities to lay out that he hath for God, and to improve his Master's stock to the best advantage. The covetous doth not more long to get more, than believers do to be rid of that they have, in the way, and on the terms, as may do most good, and be best accepted. And they are even afraid lest opportunities of doing good should overslip them, and the seed-time should pass by. A believer knows that, as his life and soul, so his worldly riches, are nowhere sure but in the hand of God. And therefore if they can procure his security, and get him to receive it, and return it them in heaven with the promised advantage, they have then secured it

indeed. All is lost that God hath not, in one way or other; and all is secured that he hath, and for which we have his promise. This is "laying it up in heaven;" Matt. vi. 21. While we keep it, we cannot secure it from thieves. When we have disposed of it according to the will of God, upon the warrant of his promise, it is then in his custody, and then it is safe. Neither rust or moth can then corrupt it, nor the strongest thieves break through and steal. To be good and do good is most like unto God; and therefore must needs be the sweetest life.

2. Works of justice also have their pleasure. For they demonstrate the justice of God himself, from whom they do proceed. That which is most pleasant to God, should be most pleasant unto us. And as he hath bid us "not forget to do good and to communicate, because with such sacrifice he is wellpleased" (Heb. xiii. 16.), so he hath told us that he "delighteth in the exercise of lovingkindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth;" Jer. ix. 24. "He hath shewed us what is good: and what doth he require of us, but to do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with our God;" Mich. vi. 8. And therefore he commandeth Israel, Hos. xii. 6. "Turn thou to God. Keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually." Private justice between man and man, and family justice between parents and children, masters and servants, and political justice between the magistrates and the people, do all maintain the order of the world, and procure both public and private peace. It is selfishness and injustice, tyranny, oppression, disobedience, and rebellion, that procure the miseries of the world. But righteousness is safe and sweet.

3. You have heard of the pleasure of holy actions, both internal and external. The truth is evident also from the objects of these facts, and the matter from which a believer may derive his pleasures. And O what an ocean of delight is here before us! Were our powers, capacities, and acts but answerable to the objects, we should presently have the joys of heaven.

1. A believer hath the ever blessed God himself to derive his comforts from. He hath his nature and attributes to be his comfort. He hath his near relations to afford him comfort; and this is more than to have all the world. It is a God of infinite power, and wisdom, and goodness, that we

believe in, that we love, and worship, and obey. It is also a Father reconciled to us, that hath taken us in covenant to him as his people, through Jesus Christ. And where shall we find comfort if not in God? It is in vain to look for that from any creature, that is not to be found in him. Poor worldlings! you have nothing that is worth the having, but the crumbs that fall from the children's table. God is our portion, and the world is yours; and yet you have less even in this world than we. You have the shadow, and we have the substance: you have the shell, and we the kernel: you have the straw and chaff, and true believers have the corn: your comforts are shaken with every storm, and tossed up and down by the justice of God, or the pride of man. But God that is our portion is unchangeable. Yesterday, to-day, and the same for ever. We have "a kingdom that cannot be moved;" Heb. xii. 28. Persecutors cannot take our God from us, nor can any thing separate us from his love; Rom. viii. 36. They may separate us from our houses, from our countries, from our friends, from our riches, our liberties, our lives; from our books, our company, and ordinances, but not from God, who is our great delight. In poverty, in persecutions, in sickness, and at death, we have still our interest in God. A Christian is never in so low a state, but he hath a God to whom he may go for comfort, who is more to him than your sweetest pleasures. Is it not a pleasure to have such a God as can cure all diseases, supply all wants, overcome all enemies, deliver in all dangers, and hath promised that he will do it so far as is for our good! If he want water that hath the sea, or he want land that hath all the earth, or he want light that hath the sun, yet doth he not need to want delight that hath the Lord to be his God, if he do but keep in the paths of grace. And are you yet unresolved, whether godliness be the most pleasant life? Take all your pleasures, and make the best of them, may I but have the Lord to be my God, and I hope I shall never desire to change with you.

2. A holy life is therefore pleasant, because we have a full sufficient Saviour, from whom we may daily fetch delight. The eternal Son of God is become the healer of our wounds, our Peace-maker with the Father, the Conqueror of our enemies, the Ransom for our sins, the Captain of our salvation, the Head of his church, and the treasure of all our

hopes and joys! Sin and misery are the works of satan, which Christ came into the world to destroy. If hypocrites can steal a little peace to their consciences, from a false conceit that they have a part in Christ, what comfort may it be to the true believer, that hath a sure and real interest in him! That is the sad and miserable life when you are out of Christ, and strangers to his covenant, and cannot say his benefits are yours, but you are yet in your sins, without his righteousness. But when we have a special interest in him, the foundation of our everlasting joy is laid, and the heart of his sin and misery is broken. What fear or sorrow can you name, that I may not fetch a sufficient remedy against from Christ? What can the prince of darkness say to our discomfort, which we may not answer by arguments from Christ? By this judge, of the comfort of a holy life. If the godly overlook the grounds of joy, that are laid in Christ, and live in a mistaken sorrow, that is not for want of reasons and warrant to rejoice, but for want of a right discerning of those reasons. But what have you that are ungodly, to answer against all the terrors of the law? or to answer against all the accusations of your consciences? or to comfort you against the remembrance of your approaching misery? While you have no part in Christ you have no right to comfort. One thought of Christ to a believing soul, may afford more delight than ever you will find in a sinful life.

3. Moreover, we have the Holy Spirit of Christ, that is purposely given us to be our Comforter. And if that be not a pleasant life that is managed by such a guide, and that be not most likely to be a joyful soul, that is possessed by the Spirit of joy itself, there is no joy then on earth to be expected. Hath God promised his Spirit to comfort you that are wicked in your sin? No; it is the malicious and deceiving spirit that is your comforter, that by his comforts he might keep you from solid, spiritual, everlasting comforts. But the repenting, believing soul that is united unto Christ, and hath already had the Spirit for his conversion, it is he that hath the promise of the Spirit for his consolation. And if that be not the most comfortable life, where the God of heaven becomes the comforter, we cannot then know the effect by the cause. If life itself will quicken, if light itself will illuminate, the comforting Spirit will certainly comfort

in the degree and season as God seeth meet, and the soul is fitted to receive it.

4. Moreover, we have the whole treasury of the Gospel to go to for our delight. And little doth the sensual, unbelieving soul know what sweetness, what supporting pleasures may be from thence derived. I had rather have the holy word of God to go to for contents, than the treasures of the rich, or the pleasures of the sensual, or the flatteries and vainglory of the ambitious man. All that the world doth make such a pudder about, which they ride and run for, which they so much glory in, will never afford them so much content, as one Scripture promise will do to a truly faithful soul. I must profess before angels and men, that I had rather have one promise of the love of God, and the life to come, which is contained in the holy Scriptures, than to have all the riches, pleasures, and honours of this world. My God, this was my covenant with thee, and to this I stand. O blessed be the Lord, that hath provided us such a magazine of delight as is this heavenly, sacred book! The precepts appoint us a pleasant work. The strictest prohibitions do but restrain us from our own calamities, and keep out of our hands the knife by which we would cut our fingers. The severest threatenings do but deter us from running into the consuming fire; and hedge about the devouring gulf, lest we should foolishly cast ourselves therein. And these are the bitterest parts of that holy word. But when we read the promises of a Saviour, and the wonderful history of his incarnation, and of his holy, self-denying life; his conquests, miracles, death, resurrection, ascension, intercession, and his promise to return; when we read of the foundation which he hath laid, and the building which he intends to finish; of his rich, abundant promises to his chosen, what provision do we find for our abundant joys! No strait can be so great, no pressure so grievous, no enemies so strong, but we have full consolation offered us in the promises, against them all. We have promises of the pardon of all our sins, and promises of heaven itself; and what can we have more? We have promises suited to every state, both prosperity and adversity. What do we need which we have not a promise of? And the word of God is no deceit. What but a promise can comfort them that are short of the possession? May I not have

more joy in sickness with a promise, than the ungodly without a promise in their health? A promise in prison sets a man as at liberty. A promise in poverty is more than riches. A promise at death is better than life. What I have a promise of, I may be sure of; but what you possess without a promise, you may lose (and your souls and hopes with it) this night. There is no condition on earth so hard to a man that hath interest in the promises, in which he may not have plentiful relief. We live by faith, and not by sense. And we reckon more on that as ours, which we hope for, than which we do possess. We are sure that there is no true felicity on earth. If then we have a promise of heaven, when infidels lie down in the dust with desperation, have we not a more comfortable life than they?

5. Moreover, we have heaven itself to fetch our comfort from. Not heaven in sight, or in possession; but heaven in promise, and seen by faith. And if heaven will not afford us pleasure, whence shall we expect it? Even sensual men can rejoice as well in what they see not, if they are assured it is theirs, as in what they see. And why then may not believers do so much more? A worldling, when he seeth not his money in his chest, or at use, or his lands and cattle that are from him, can yet rejoice in them as if he saw them. And should not we rejoice in the certain hopes of heaven though yet we see it not? When I am pained in sickness, and roll in restless weariness of my flesh, if then I can say, I shall be in heaven, may it not be the inward rejoicing of my soul? You know where you are, but you know not where you shall be. The believer knoweth where he shall be, as truly as he knoweth where he is (unless it be one that by his frailty hath not reached unto assurance, who yet hath reached unto hope). What great matter is it if I lay in the greatest pain, if I can say, I shall have everlasting ease in heaven? or if I lay in prison, or in sordid poverty, and can say, I shall shortly be with Christ? or if I had lost the love of all men, and could say, that I shall everlastingly enjoy the love of God?

Most of your comforts do come in by the way of your thoughts. And what thoughts should so rejoice the soul as the thoughts of our abode with Christ for ever? If a day in the courts of God be so delightful, what is ten thousand millions of ages in the court of glory; and all then as fresh as at the first day? There it is that our sin will be put off; our

carnal enmity laid by ; our temptations will be over ; our enemies will all have done ; our fears and sorrows will be at an end ; our desires will be accomplished ; our differences be reconciled ; our charity perfected ; and our expectations fully satisfied ; and hope turned into full fruition. O may I but be able, with stronger faith, and fuller confidence, to say that heaven is mine, and when this tabernacle is dissolved, I shall be with Christ, my life and my death will be delightful, and I need not complain for want of pleasure. Let who will take the pleasures of the flesh, may I but have this. In prayer, in meditation, in holy conference, in every duty, it is the expectation of approaching blessedness that drops in sweetness into all. No wonder if it can sweeten a course of duty when it can make light the greatest sufferings, and turn pain into pleasure, death into life, as being unworthy to be compared unto the glory which shall be revealed.

But the wicked have none of these delights, unless they steal a little by self-deceit. They may make their best of their present pleasures, and of the cup while it is at their mouths, and of their wealth and honour while it is in their hands. But it is little pleasure that they can fetch from heaven ! The thought of it may rather feed their terrors. What pleasure they can pick out of the dirt let them make their best of. But heavenly pleasures are above their reach.

So much for the objects of a holy life, from whence a believer may fetch his pleasure.

Object. ‘ But you tell us only of the pleasant part ; but the troublesome and bitter part you say nothing of.’

Answ. Come on, and say your worst of a holy life, and tell us which is that bitter part.

Object. ‘ The Scripture requireth us to mortify the flesh, to renounce the world, to forbear our pleasures, to deny ourselves, and to take up our cross and follow Christ ; and will you call this a pleasant life ?’

Answ. And do you indeed think this so sad a business ? Here are three things contained in this objection, as the matter that seemeth so displeasing to you. 1. The parting with your sins. 2. The sufferings that are principally for sin. 3. The sufferings that are principally for the cause of Christ.

1. And do you think sin is so lovely a thing that a man cannot live merrily without it ? Sin is the breach of the laws of God, and the injury of the heavenly Majesty, and the pro-

vocation of his hot displeasure, and the poison and sickness of the soul. And is it your sport to abuse the Lord? Is your pleasure gone, if you may not injure the God that made you? What natures, what sinful hearts have you, that must have such pleasures? Cannot a man live merrily unless he may provoke the God of heaven, and trample upon mercy, and despise salvation? Can you not live in pleasure unless you may drink poison, or keep your sickness, or tumble in the dirt? One would think that mischief to ourselves or others should be small pleasure to an honest mind. It is no pleasure to you to spit in the face of your dearest friends, or to abuse your parents, or to provoke your neighbours; and is it such pleasure as you cannot forsake to abuse the Lord, and wrong your souls? The pleasures of sin do tend to pain. Some pain doth usually attend it here, and much more hereafter. God would prevent your pain and misery, by preventing or destroying your sin. And do you accuse his word, because it would keep you from so costly, so bitter, so dangerous delights? It is for your pleasure, that this pleasure is forbidden you. The sweetness of the poison of sin will be soon gone, when the gripings of the tormented conscience do remain. You will forbear the most delightful fruits or drinks, if your physician tell you they will hazard your life, or torment you afterwards. You are short-sighted and short-witted, and look but to the present relish of things, and choose them if you taste them sweet; but God looks to your everlasting pleasures. So that you may well reckon it among the pleasures of a holy life, that you have such preservatives against the greatest sorrows; and that you are kept from the pleasures that will be bitterness in the latter end.

Yea, at the present hath not drunkenness more trouble attending it than sobriety? Reckon up the consuming of men's estates, the troubles of their families, the sicknesses of their bodies, the shame and contempt that it bringeth on them here, and the wounds of their consciences, and tell me whether it were not more pleasure to forbear those cups than to drink them. And hath not gluttony more trouble attending it than temperance? By that time the charge be paid, the sickness that fulness breedeth be endured, the physician paid, and all the effects of gluttony overcome, you will find that the pleasure was little to the pain. The like I may say

of uncleanness, worldliness, passion, pride, and all other sins that usually bring a punishment with them.

2. And then for castigatory sufferings, it is not godliness that is the cause of them (as sufferings). Sin less, and suffer less. Provoke not God, and he will spare the rod. Do you hurt yourselves like careless children, and then blame God for bidding you take heed? God doth not punish men for holiness, and welldoing. It is for want of holiness that you are punished. I think therefore it is part of the pleasure of a holy life, that it keeps men out of the way of punishment. You must have pain, and unpleasant physic, when once you have taken a surfeit of sensual delight, and made yourselves sick with too much of the creature. Holiness would have prevented this. And when that is too late, it would cure it by the cheapest means that your health will bear. Is it not then unreasonable, when you have troubled yourselves, to blame your physician for troubling you in order to a cure?

3. And for those sufferings that are principally for Christ, consider, 1. That they are also originally from sin, and therefore you may know what to blame for the bitter part. Though the time, and place, and manner, and measure of your sufferings may proceed from the gracious providence of your Lord; yet that supposeth that sin had brought you into a state of suffering in general before; which Christ did not presently and plenarily remit and take off, but disposeth of them by his wisdom, as may make most for his glory and your good. 2. And will you grudge at a little transitory pain, that is usually requited with comforts in this life, and rewarded with pleasures unspeakable hereafter! You grudge not to cast away your seed in hope of an increase at harvest; nor do you murmur at your daily labour if it be but blessed with success. And will you grudge to pass through sufferings to glory, to sow in tears that you may reap in joy? It is but few that suffer martyrdom, or any great matter for the cause of Christ, especially in our days. And those few have usually more joy than sorrow. If you knew the joys of martyrs, you would never so shrink at the sufferings of martyrs. And for a few mocks and scorns of foolish men, it is scarcely worth the name of a suffering. Nor is it so much as wicked men suffer in their sin. As godliness is a shame among the foolish, wicked men, so wickedness is a shame among all

that are pious, wise, and sober. And why should not the shame of sin be more loathed than the undeserved shame of honesty? Alas, all this is nothing to the sorrows of the ungodly. A little of the vinegar of affliction will make us relish our prosperity the better, and through our frailty is become a necessary sauce to that luscious state that we are so apt to surfeit on! Do you not see what lamentable work prosperity, victories, honour, and worldly wealth and power have made in the world? and shall we grudge at that necessary, moderate affliction that saveth us from the like overthrows? O how few are able to withstand the temptations of great or long prosperity! Experience of the frequent, woeful falls of prospering men, that seemed once as firm as any, hath made me fear when I hear of the exaltation of my friends, and the less to grieve for their adversity or my own. Holiness therefore is the most pleasant way, notwithstanding the afflictions that do attend it. And if God will give me an increase of holiness (of faith and love, and a heavenly mind), though it be with an increase of my afflictions, I hope I shall take it as an increase of my pleasure, and give him the praise of so merciful a dispensation. And thus I have proved to you from the nature of holiness, that it is the most pleasant way.

II. I should next shew you the delights of holiness from the helps and concomitants that promote our pleasure. But because I am afraid of lengthening my discourse too much, I shall only name a few things of many.

1. God being our God in covenant, his love is to the holy soul, as the sun is to our bodies, to illuminate, warm, revive, and comfort them; and did not sin cause some eclipses or raise some clouds, or shut the windows, we should rejoice continually, and find how sweet a thing it is, being justified by faith, to have peace with God.

2. We are in covenant with Jesus Christ, who intercedeth for our peace with God. And the Father always heareth his intercession; John xi. 42. And therefore that measure of comfort which he seeth suitable to our present state, we shall be sure of. "Who shall condemn us? when it is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us;" Rom. viii. 34. "We have a great high-priest that is pass-

ed into the heavens, even Jesus the Son of God ; one that is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and was in all points tempted like as we are, but without sin ;” and therefore through him we may “ come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need ;” Heb. iv. 14—16. What comforting words hath he spoken to us in the Gospel, and what comfortable relations hath he put us into ! He calleth us his friends, if we do his commandments, as if servants were too low a title ; John xv. 14, 15. “ Peace he leaveth with us : his peace he giveth to us ; not as the world giveth, commanding that we let not our hearts be troubled or afraid ;” chap. xiv. 27. To those that love him, he hath promised his Father’s love, and that they will “ come to him, and make their abode with him ; ver. 23. “ If any man serve him, let him follow him ; and where Christ is, there shall his servant be ; if any man serve Christ, him will the Father honour ;” chap. xii. 26.

3. That we might have sure consolation, the Spirit of Christ is given to be our comforter ; and we are in covenant with him also, who surely will perform his covenants.

4. The servants of Christ have his holy image, the mark of his children, which is the indwelling evidence of his love, to assure them of their happiness.

5. They have manifold experience of the kindness of their Father, in hearing their prayers, and helping them in their straits, and delivering them in their distresses.

6. They have also the help of the experience of others, even of all the godly with whom they do converse, who can comfort them with their comforts, and tell them how good they have found the Lord.

7. They have the ministers of Christ appointed by office to be the helpers of their faith and joy ; to be the messengers of glad tidings to them, and to tell them from God of the pardon of their sins, and of his favour to them in Christ, and to heal the brokenhearted, and preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, &c. Luke iv. 18. To have a deputed officer of Christ to absolve the penitent, and deliver them pardon in the name of Christ, and to pray for them, and direct them, and resolve their doubts, and shew them the promises that may support them, and help to profligate their temptations, must needs be much to the comfort of believers.

As the care of a father is the comfort of the child, and the care of the physician is a comfort to the sick.

8. They have all the ordinances suited to their comfort; the word read, preached, and meditated on; the sacraments and the public praises of God, and communion of the saints (of which before).

9. They have multitudes of mercies still about them, and every day renewed on them, to feed their comforts.

10. They have a promise that "all things shall work together for their good;" and that so all their afflictions themselves shall be their commodities, and death itself shall be their gain (Rom. viii. 28. Phil. i. 21.), and all their enemies shall be subdued by Christ the prince of their salvation.

So that from this much you may see, that for joy and pleasure, there is no life that hath the advantages that a holy life hath. "As for the ungodly they are not so; but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away;" Psal. i. 4. These pleasures grow not in their wicked way, nor do such strangers know believers' joys.

III. Lastly, I should also have shewed you the pleasure of holiness by the effects; but here also to avoid prolixity, I will but name a few.

1. Holiness is pleasing to God himself; and therefore it must needs be pleasant to the saints that have it. For it is their end and chiefest pleasure to please God. They know that this is the end for which they were created, redeemed, and renewed; and therefore that is the most pleasant life to them, in which they find that God is best pleased. And therefore "they labour, that whether present or absent, they may be accepted of him;" 2 Cor. v. 9. They are "a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ;" 1 Pet. ii. 5.

2. Holiness must needs be pleasant to the soul, because it is the spiritual health of the soul, and the means and certain evidence of its safety. And health is a constant, sensible delight. And to know that our souls have escaped the danger of the wrath of God, and everlasting misery, must needs be a greater pleasure than any of the matters of this world can afford. One serious thought of the salvation, which holiness is the earnest of, may give that true contentment to the soul, that all the wealth and glory of the world can never give.

3. Holiness removeth fears and troubles, and therefore must needs be a pleasant state. It removeth the fears of the wrath of God, and of damnation, and the fears of all destructive evils. It tends to heal the wounded soul, and pacify the clamorous conscience, and abate all worldly and groundless sorrows, for which the wicked have no true cure.

4. Holiness is the destruction of sin, and sin is the cause of all calamities, and therefore holiness must needs be pleasant.

5. Holiness doth consist in rejoicing graces, that are exceeding pleasant in the exercise; as faith, hope, love, patience, &c. yea it consisteth in joy itself; Rom. xiv. 17.

6. It fits the soul for communion with God, who is the fountain of delights; and it brings us near him, and acquaints us with him as a God of love; and therefore must needs be a pleasant state.

7. You see by experience, that when once men have tried a holy life, they think they can never have enough of it. The more holy they are, the more holy they would be. He that hath most would fain have more. And the weakest desireth no less than to be perfect. And do you think men that have tried it, would so long after more and more, if it were not pleasant?

Judge also by the labour and diligence of the godly, who "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," and make it the principal business of their lives. Would they make all this ado for nothing? or for that which is a matter of no delight?

Judge also by the delights which they voluntarily forsake, when they let go all their sinful pleasures, and renounce all the glory of the world; would they make this exchange if they had not found a more pleasant course, and that which tends to everlasting pleasure?

8. You see also that the truly godly, when once they have tried a holy life, will never go back again to their former pleasures, but loathe the very remembrance of them. It is not all the honours, and riches, and pleasures in the world, that can hire them to forsake a holy life. Sure therefore they find it the most pleasant course; if not in sensible delights, yet at least in easing their consciences, and securing their minds from the terrors that sinful pleasures would produce. If they found that godliness answered not their ex-

pectation, they have leisure enough, and temptations too many, to turn back into the state from whence they came. But how would they abhor such a motion as this!

9. If holiness were not a pleasant thing, it could not help us to bear up under all our afflictions, nor make us rejoice in tribulation, as it doth. That which can sweeten gall and wormwood must needs be very sweet itself. That which can make reproach, and scorn, and poverty, and imprisonment either sweet or tolerable, is sure itself a pleasant thing.

10. Lastly, if holiness were not pleasant, it could not make death itself so easy, nor take off its terrors, nor cause the martyrs to suffer so joyfully for Christ. Death is the king of terrors, and so bitter a cup, that it must needs be a pleasant thing indeed, that can sweeten it.

Besides all this that hath been said, let me briefly have some general aggravations of the delights of holiness, and compare it as we go with the delights of the ungodly.

1. The delights of holiness are the most great, and glorious, and sublime delights. They are fetched from the most great and glorious things. It is God, and his grace, and everlasting glory that feed our pleasures. Whereas, the delights of sensual men are fed with trifles. What do they rejoice in but the fooleries of sin, and the filthiness of their own transgressions! What is it that contenteth them, but a dream of honour, or the good will and word of mortal men, or a brutish sportfulness, or the pleasing of the itch of lust, or the provision that they have laid up for the flesh? The treasures of a kingdom excel not the treasure of a child's pin-box the thousandth part so much as heaven excels the treasures of the ungodly. Judge therefore by the matter that feeds their pleasure, which of the two is the more pleasant life; to sport in their own shame, and laugh at the brink of misery with the ungodly, or to delight ourselves in the love of God, and rejoice in the assured hope of glory with the true believer?

2. The delights of holiness are the most rational, well-grounded, sure delights. They are not delusory, nor grounded on mistakes or fancies. They are warranted by the truth and all-sufficiency of God, and the certainty of his promise, and the immutability of his counsels, and the sure reward prepared for his saints. None but a lying, malicious devil, or his instruments that participate of his nature, or a blind

corrupted, partial flesh, will ever go about to question the foundations of our faith and comforts. The hopes and comforts that are built upon this rock, will never fall, nor make us ashamed.

But the ungodly rejoice in their own delusions. It is ignorance and error that they are beholden to for their mirth. They laugh in their sleep, or as madmen in their distraction. Did they know that satan rejoiceth in their joys, and that an offended God is always present, and how poor a matter it is that they rejoice in, it would mar their mirth. If they saw the hell that they are near, or well considered where they stand, and what a case their souls are in, they would have little list to play or laugh. If they knew aright the shortness of their pleasures, and the length of their sorrows, and in what a doleful case their wealth and fleshly delights will leave them, it would turn their laughter into mourning and lamentation. So that they rejoice but (as a sick man in a frenzy, or as a fool upon some good news to him that is false) upon mere mistake.

3. The delights of holiness are the most pure delights, and most entire and complete. There is no evil in it mixed with the good, and therefore nothing to interrupt the joy. Our joys indeed are too much interrupted; but that is not from any hurt that is in a holy life; but by the contrary sin, which holiness must work out. If men take poison, let them not blame nature that strives against it, if they are sick; but let them blame themselves, and the poison, that puts nature to expel it. In holiness itself there is nothing but good, and therefore nothing that should grieve us.

But it is far otherwise with sensual delights. As they are sinful, they are wholly evil. As they are natural, feeding upon the creature alone, they are as it is, a mixture of vanity and vexation. Every creature hath its unsuitableness and imperfection, by which it disturbeth even where it pleaseth, and troubleth where it comforteth, and frustrateth and disappointeth more than it satisfieth. The more we love it, usually the more we suffer by it. That thing which we most excessively love, is ordinarily our sharpest scourge. That friend whom we most excessively love, is usually our greatest sorrow; either by their failing our expectations, or by our failing theirs, or our insufficiency to accomplish the good which we desire of them. If they prove unkind, it is more

grievous than the unkindness of many others. If they prove faithful, how deeply do we suffer with them in all their sufferings! Their wants do pinch us as our own. Their reproaches are our shame. Their losses take as much from us. Their sickness paineth us. Their death half killeth us. And he that is so happy as to have many such friends, is so unhappy as to have more burdens, fears, and griefs to suffer, and more deaths to die than other men. But especially to ungodly men, these earthly comforts are uncomfortable, because they have none of the divine delights that are the kernel and the spirits, but take up with the shell or husk. And because their mirth is mixed with their own misery, which conscience sometimes gripes them for with such deep remorse as cools their comforts. And some thoughts of the shortness of their pleasures will be stepping in, and ending them before their time. So that the bitterness of worldly things surpasseth the delight.

4. The delights of holiness are deep and solid, and therefore do establish and corroborate the hearts. But sensual delights are like children's laughter; they are slight, and outside, and flitting, and vain. As children laugh in one breath, and cry in the next; so worldly joys are followed at the heels by sorrows. For they lie not deep, and fortify not the heart against distresses, as the delights of faith and holiness do.

5. The pleasures of the saints are the gift of God, and allowed of by him; commanded by his word, and promoted by his promises and mercies, and are but the fruits of his everlasting love. And being so divine, they must needs be excellent.

But the pleasures of ungodly, worldly men are partly forbidden and condemned by God, and partly contradicted and confounded, by his terrible threatenings, and the discovery of his wrath. "There is no peace saith the Lord, to the wicked;" Isa. xlviii. 22. lvii. 21. God doth disown and protest against their peace. If they will keep it, and make it good, it must be against his will. He forbiddeth joy to a rebellious people. "Rejoice not O Israel for joy as other people: for thou hast gone a whoring from thy God;" Hos. ix. 1. He calleth them to "weeping and mourning, and rent of the heart;" Joel ii. 12, 13. Hear what God saith to them in their greatest pleasures, James v. 1—5. "Go to

now ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days:— Ye have lived in pleasure on earth, and been wanton. Ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter—” A man would think it should either turn them, or torment them, and fill their hearts with continual horror, to find God thus solemnly protesting against their peace, and sentencing them to woe and sorrows.

6. The pleasures of the godly are clean and noble, and honest and honourable. They delight in things of the greatest worth, for which they had their natures, their time, and all. But the pleasures of sinners are base and filthy. They delight as swine in wallowing in the mire: and as the dog to eat his own vomit; 2 Pet. ii. 22. They delight to wrong the God that made them, and by whom they live, and to cross the ends of their lives and mercies; and to drive away all true delights, and to undo themselves. This is the matter of their delight.

7. The devil is a great enemy to the delights of holiness; which is a sign that they are excellent. He doth what he can to keep men from a holy state, lest they should meet with the happiness that attends it. And if he prevail not in this his chief design, he doth what he can to fill up the lives of believers with calamities. All the enemies [that he can raise up against them, shall by temptations, scorns, or injuries, assault their comforts. All the storms that he can raise shall be sure to fall upon them. How busy is he to fill them with fears and doubtings! and to cast perplexing thoughts into their minds! or to mislead them in some perplexing ways! and fasten on them entangling doctrines, or disquieting principles! How cunningly and diligently will he argue against their peace and comforts, and seek to hide the love of God, and dishonour the blood, and grace, and covenant of Christ, and cross the comforting workings of the Spirit! How subtilly will he question all our evidences, and extenuate all God's comforting mercies, and do all that he can that the godly may have a hell on earth, though they shall have none hereafter. It is sure an excellent joy and pleasure, which satan is so great an enemy to.

8. The delights of holiness do make us better. They are so far from disordering the mind, and leading us to sin, that they compose and purify the mind, and make sin much more odious to us than before. No man hates sin so much as he that hath seen the pleased face of God, and tasted most the sweetness of his grace, and tried the pleasant paths of life. And therefore it is, that when a believer comes from fervent prayers, or from heavenly conference or meditation, or from hearing the blessed word of life, laid open plainly, and applied powerfully to his soul, he would then abhor a temptation to sensual delights, if they were set before him. Till we lose the relish of holy things, and suffer our delight in God to fade, we are seldom taken in the snares of any fleshly vanities. Money is dirt to us, and honour a smoke, and lust doth stink, as long as we maintain our delights in God. He is the best and highest Christian, that hath most of these spiritual delights.

But fleshly pleasures make men worse. They intoxicate the mind, and fill it with vanity and folly. They are the snares to entrap us ; and the harlots that do bewitch us, and defile the soul that should be chaste for God. The noise of this sensual, foolish mirth doth drown the voice of God and reason, so that in the most needful matters they cannot be heard. In their hunting and hawking, dicing and carding, drinking and revelling, feasting and dancing, how little of God or heaven is on the sinner's mind ! Seldom is the soul so unfit for duty, so incapable of instruction, so hardened against the word and warnings of the Lord, as in the depth of sensual delights. Then it is that they are " foolish, disobedient, and deceived," when they are serving divers lusts and pleasures," as Paul that had tried both ways confesseth, Tit. iii. 3. None so unlike to be the servants of Christ, as they that are " clothed in purple and fine linen, and that fare sumptuously (or deliciously) every day ;" Luke xvi. To live " in rioting and drunkenness, in chambering and wantonness, in strife and envying, and to make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof," is the description of one that walks not honestly, and is far from a Christian's life and hopes ; Rom. xiii. 13, 14. It is those voluptuous, sensual sinners, that most obstinately shut out all the reproofs, and refuse him that speaketh to them from heaven, and will not so much as soberly consider of the things that concern their everlast-

ing peace; and therefore are oft so forsaken of grace, that they grow to be scorers of the means of their salvation, and "being past feeling do give themselves over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness;" Eph. iv. 19. Which then is most desirable? the healing or the wounding pleasure? the quickening or the killing mirth? the wholesome or the poisonous sweet? the delights that mend us and further our salvation, or corrupting pleasures that drown men in perdition?

9. The delights of holiness are of kin to heaven. They are of the same nature with those that saints and angels have with God (though we must acknowledge an inconceivable difference). It is the same God and the same glory that now delighteth us as seen by faith, which shall then delight us when seen by intuition with open face. We are solacing ourselves in love and praise, with the same employment that we must have in heaven. And therefore if heaven be the state of the greatest joy and pleasure, the state of grace, and work of holiness, that is most like it, must needs be next it.

But sensual pleasures are bestial and sordid, and so far unlike the joys of heaven, that nothing more withdraws the mind, or maketh it unmeet for heaven.

10. Lastly, The delights of holiness are durable, even everlasting. The further we go, the greater cause we have of joy. It is not a mutable good that we rejoice in, but in the immutable God, the Ancient of days, and in that Christ that loveth his spouse with an everlasting love; and in the sure and faithful promises; and in the hopes of the kingdom that cannot be moved. The spring of our pleasure is in heaven, and our rejoicing is but the beginning of that which must there be perpetuated. Death cannot kill the joys of a believer; the grave shall not bury them; millions of ages shall not end them! Here may they be interrupted, because the pleased face of God may be eclipsed, and sin and satan may cast malicious doubts into our minds; and the neighbourhood of the flesh will force the mind to participate of its sufferings. But still God will keep their comforts alive, at least in the root, and help them in the act, as we have need of them, and are fit for them. And in the world of joy for which he is preparing us, our joy shall be perfected, and never have interruption or end. Holy festivals and ordinances, and sweetest communion of saints, and dearest love truest

friends, and perfect health and prosperity in the world, and all other comforts set together, that this world affords, are but short emblems and small foretastes of the joys which the face of God will afford us, and we shall have with Christ, his saints and angels, to all eternity.

But sensual pleasures are of so short continuance, that they are gone before we feel well that we have them. The drunkard, the glutton, the fornicator are drinking but a sugared cup of poison, and merrily sowing the seeds of everlasting sorrow: satan is but scratching them (as the butcher shaves the throat of the swine) before he kill them. One quarter of an hour ends the pleasure, and leaves a damp of sadness in its room: he that hath had forty or fifty years' pleasure, hath no relish of it when it is past; but it is as if it had never been, and much worse. He that hath spent a day, or month, or year in pleasure, hath no more at night, or at the year's end, when it is gone, than he that hath spent that time in sorrow. The bones and dust of thousands lie now in the churchyard, that have tasted many a sweet cup and morsel, and have had many a merry, wanton day; and are they now any better for it, than if they had never known it? and are not the poor and sorrowful there their equals? And doubtless their souls have as little of those pleasures as their dust. In heaven they are abhorred: in hell they are turned into tormented flames, and remembered as fuel for the devouring fire. There are gluttons, but no more good cheer: there are drunkards, but no more drink: there are fornicators, but no more lustful pleasures: there are the playful wasters of their time, but no more sport and recreation: there are the vain-glorious, proud, ambitious souls, but not in glory, honour and renown; but their aspiring hath cast them into the gulf of misery, and their pride hath covered them with utter confusion, and their glory is turned to their endless shame. Those that are now overwhelmed with the wrath of God, and shut up under desperation, are the souls that lately wallowed here in the delights of the flesh, and enjoyed for a season the pleasure of sin; and now what fruit have they of all their former seeming happiness? He that is feasted and gallantly adorned and attended to-day, is crying for a drop of water in vain to-morrow; Luke xvi. 23—26. Christ tells you the gain of earthly riches, and the duration of earthly pleasures, to the ungodly, Luke vi.

24, 25.; "Woe to you that are rich, for you have received your consolation: woe to you that are full, for you shall hunger: woe to you that laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep:" that is, You that live a sensual life, and take up your pleasure and felicity here, shall find that all will end in sorrow. But, "blessed are ye that hunger now, for ye shall be filled: blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh; v. 21.; that is, You that are contented to pass through sorrows and tribulation on earth, to the kingdom where you have placed your happiness and hopes, shall find your sorrows will end in joy; and therefore you are blessed while you seem miserable to the world. "Ye shall weep and lament; but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy;" John xvi. 20. "Now you have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you;" verse 22. We have a constant interest in the Fountain of all joy; and if our sun be clouded, it is but for a moment. "Our Maker is our Husband; the Lord of Hosts is his name: and our Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth:—For a small moment may he forsake us, but with great mercy will he gather us. In a little wrath he may hide his face from us for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will he have mercy on us, saith the Lord our Redeemer. As he swore that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so hath he sworn that he will not be wroth with his people, nor rebuke them. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills shall be removed; but his kindness shall not depart from us, nor the covenant of his peace be removed; saith the Lord, that hath mercy on us;" Isaiah liv. 5—19. "For his anger endureth but for a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning;" Psal. xxx. 5. Storms may arise that may affright us; but how quickly will they all be over? "Come my people (saith the Lord, Isaiah xxvi. 20.) enter into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast."

And as the momentary sorrow of the godly is forgotten in everlasting joy, so the joy of the wicked is but for a moment, and is drowned in everlasting sorrows. "Knowest thou not this of old, since man was placed upon earth, that

the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment? Though his excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds; yet he shall perish for ever like his own dung: they which have seen him shall say, Where is he? He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found: yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night: the eye also which saw him, shall see him no more; neither shall his place any more behold him;" Job xx. 4—9. "They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organs: they spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave;" Job xxi. 12, 13.

It would grieve a considerate believer to look on a worldly, sensual gallant, in the midst of his vainglory, or any unsanctified man in his mirth and pleasure, and to think where that man will shortly be, and how the case will be altered with him, and where his sport and mirth will leave him. As it would sadden our hearts to see one of them struck dead in the place, or to see the devil fetch them away, and spoil the game; so should it grieve us to foresee the stroke of death, and the condemnation of their souls to everlasting misery. And can that man much value the pleasure of ungodly men, that doth foresee this end? Would you not laugh at him that were a prince but for a day, and must be the scorn of the world to-morrow? or that would choose one day of mirth and pleasure, though he knew it would fill the rest of his life with pain and misery? If folly and stupidity were any wonder, it were a wonder that ungodly men can be merry, when their consciences tell them that they are not sure to stay one hour out of hell; nor to hold on their mirth till the end of the game. But while they are saying, "Soul, take thy ease, eat, drink and be merry;" they may suddenly be told from God, "Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee;" and then whose is thy wealth? and then where is thy sport and mirth? Luke xii. 19, 20. As the tender flowers and roses of the spring do fall before the nipping frosts, and will not live in winter storms; no more will your fading mirth endure the frowns of God, the face of death, nor scarce a serious forethought of the day that you are near. And such matter of horror is continually before you, while you are under the wrath and curse of God, in a carnal unregenerate state, that

you are beholden to folly, security and stupidity for that ease which hindereth your everlasting ease.

So that all things considered, I must seriously profess, that (however the ungodly have some pleasant dreams, and may live awhile in carelessness and stupidity, or flee in the face, while the beginning of hell is in their consciences, yet) I must judge, that a life of faith and holiness are unspeakably sweet, if it were but for this, that they save the conscience from the gripes, and fears, and terrible thoughts, that either sometime feed on the ungodly, or are ready to devour their mirth and them. So sad and frightful a thing it is to be unsanctified, and in a state of sin, that it is a high commendation of the delights of holiness, that they so much deliver us from those grievous terrors, and are so powerful an antidote to preserve the heart from the wicked's pangs and desperation. Believe it, when conscience, death, and judgment are the messengers to declare your endless sorrows, you will then wish, and ten thousand times wish, that you had some of the faith and holiness of the saints, to be a cordial to your sinking hearts; and then you would take it as a matter of unspeakable joy, to be found in such a state as you now count sad and melancholy. Ask but a dying man, whether fleshly pleasure or godliness be the sweeter thing? Now when the delusions of prosperity are gone, which do men most relish, and which is it that they would own? By the consent of all the wise men in the world, I may well conclude that a holy life is incomparably the most pleasant.

But I know there are many things that seem to cross all this that I have spoken, which will be the matter of the objections of ungodly men, and therefore must have an answer, before we pass any further. And the principal objection is from the too common case of those that fear God, who walk so sadly, and doubt, and complain, and mourn so frequently, and shew so little cheerfulness and joy, when many of the ungodly live in mirth, that you will think I speak against experience, when I say that a life of holiness is so pleasant, and therefore that it is not to be believed. You will say, 'Do we not see the contrary in the sadness of their faces, and hear it in their sad lamenting words?'

To this I must give many particulars in answer, which

when you have laid together, you may see that all this makes nothing against the pleasantness of the ways of God.

And, 1. You must difference between the entrance into holiness, and the progress ; and between a new beginner, that is but lately turned from his ungodliness, and one that hath had time to try and understand the ways of God. Those that are entering, or but newly come in, must needs have sorrow. But what is the cause of it? Not their godliness but their ungodliness. I mean, it is their ungodliness which they lament, though it be godliness that causeth them to lament it. Can you expect that an ingenuous man should see his sin, and look back on so many years' transgressions, and not be grieved? To see that he hath so long abused God, and lost his time, and neglected his salvation, and that he hath lain so long in so miserable a state, must needs cause remorse in the conscience that hath any feeling. And will you say that godliness is unpleasant, because it makes a man sorrow for his ungodliness? If a man that hath killed his dearest friend, or his own father, be grieved for the fact when he cometh to repentance, will you blame his repentance or his murder for his grief? Will you say, What a hurtful thing is this repentance! or rather, What an odious crime was it that must be so repented of! Would you wish a man that hath lived so long in sin and misery, to have no sorrow for it in his return? Especially when it is but a healing sorrow, preparing for remission, and not a sorrow joined with despair, as theirs will be that die impenitently? Observe the complaints of penitent souls, whether it be their present godliness, or their former ungodliness, which they lament? Will you hear a man lament his former sinful, careless life, and yet will you lay the blame on the contrary course of duty, which now he hath undertaken? You may as wisely accuse a man for landing in a safe harbour, because he there lamenteth his loss by shipwreck while he was at sea. Or as wisely may you blame a man for rising that complaineth how he hurt himself by his fall. And as honestly may you accuse the chastity of your wife, because she lamenteth her former adultery; or the fidelity of your friend or servant, because he lamenteth his former unfaithfulness.

But though the pangs of the new birth be somewhat grievous, and we come not into the world of grace without some lamentation, yet this is not the state of the holy life, into

which we enter; nor are those pangs to continue all our days.

2. You must distinguish between the weaker and the stronger sort of Christians, and consider that children are apt to cry; but it is not therefore better to be unborn. Sickness is querulous, and the weak are froward; but it is not therefore better to be dead. The godly are not perfectly godly. They are sinners while they are saints. They have holiness, but they have corruption with it. Their sin is conquered, but yet not totally rooted out. The relics do remain though it do not reign. And it is the remnant of their unholiness that they lament, and not their holiness. They grieve not that they are godly, but that they are no more godly. It troubleth them not that they are come home to Christ, but that they have brought so much of their corruption with them. Hearken whether they complain of their humility or their pride; of their faith, or unbelief; their confidence, or their distrust; their repentance, or their hardness of heart. It is not their heavenly mindedness that troubleth them, but their earthly mindedness. Nor is it their spirituality, but their carnality. Nor is it the duties, but the weakness and faultiness of their souls in duty. Not that they do it, but that they do it no better. It is more holiness that they beg for, and lament the want of. And will you say that holiness is unpleasant, because men would so fain have more of it? You would reason with more wisdom in another case. If a man that hath tasted meat or drink, complain because he hath no more, you would not blame his food for that: nor gather from thence that it is unpleasant, or that famine is more delightful.

3. You must distinguish between those Christians that have fallen since their conversion, into any great and wounding sin, or nourish some vexatious distempers; and those that walk more uprightly with God, and maintain their integrity and peace. No wonder if David, after his sin, complain of the breaking of his bones and heart; and if Peter go out and weep bitterly. The servants of Christ do know so much of the evil of sin, that they cannot make so light of it, as the blind and obdurate world that are past feeling. That sin which hath cost them formerly so dear, and hath cost Christ so much dearer on their behalf, must needs cost some smart in the penitent soul. Sickness is felt because it supposeth the subject to be alive; but the dead feel not that they are

dead and rotten. And it doth not follow that therefore death is more desirable than sickness. It is because they are so like to the ungodly, that the servants of Christ do grieve and complain. But so far as they feel the healthfulness of their souls, and conscious of their sincerity and upright conversations, they have greater comfort than the world can afford them.

4. You must distinguish between those Christians that by misapprehensions are unacquainted with their own felicity, and those that better understand their state. If a man be never so holy, and know it not, but by temptations is brought to doubt, whether he be not yet in his unsanctified state, no wonder if this man be grieved at these fears. But his grief is not because he is sanctified, but because he is afraid lest he be unsanctified. And this shews that holiness is most lovely in his eyes; or else why should he be much troubled, when he doth but doubt whether he be holy or not? If a rich man by a false report should believe that he is robbed of his goods and treasure, or that his houses are burnt when it is not so, he will mourn or be troubled till he know the truth. And will any be so foolish as to conclude from thence, that riches are more uncomfortable than beggary? Had you not rather be rich, though for a time you know it not, than to live in certain, continual want? If a man that is in health be persuaded by mistake that he is in a consumption, he will be troubled by his mistake. But will you thence conclude that sickness is more comfortable than health? Is it not better to have health with those mistaken fears, than to live in sickness? Methinks you should rather argue on the contrary side, How sweet is health when the fear of losing it is so troublesome! How bitter is sickness and death, when the very fear of them is so grievous! And so you should say, How sweet is holiness, when it is so troublesome to those that have it, so much as to fear lest they have it not! and, How miserable a life is it to be ungodly, when it is so grievous to the servants of Christ even once to fear lest they are ungodly!

But go to those Christians that know themselves, and are truly acquainted with their sincerity and their privileges, and see whether they walk so uncomfortably as those mistaken, doubting souls. You will find them in another case, and

hear other kind of language from their mouths ; even the joyful praises of their Redeemer, and the thankful acknowledgments of his abundant love. How sweet unto their souls is the remembrance of kindness ! and how delightful a work is it from day to day to magnify his name !

5. You must also distinguish between those weak, mistaken Christians, that understand not the extent of the covenant of grace, and those that do understand it. If a believer by mistake should think that the grace of the Gospel extendeth not to such as he, because he is unworthy, and his sins are great, no wonder if he be troubled. As you would be if you should conceive that your lease were not made to you, but to another ; or as a malefactor would be if he thought his pardon belonged not to him, but to another man. But hence you should rather observe the riches and excellencies of the Gospel, and the happiness of the heirs of promise, than dream that it is better be strangers to the holy covenant still. They are better that have a promise of life and understand it not, than they that have none. But those that know the freeness and fulness of the promise, and study with all saints to comprehend what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge (Eph. iii. 18, 19.), do use to walk more comfortably according to the riches of that grace which they do possess.

6. Consider also, that most of these complaining Christians are glad that they are in any measure got out of their former state, and therefore apprehend their cause to be better than it was before. Or else they would turn back to the state that they were in ; which they would not do for all the world. And therefore they take a godly life to be far more pleasant to them that do attain it.

7. Moreover, the sorrow of believers is such as may consist with joy. At the same time while they are grieved that they are no better, they are gladder of that measure of grace which they have received, than they would be to be made the rulers of the world. While they are mourning for the remnant of their sins, they are glad that it is but a remnant that they have to mourn for. Yea, while they are troubled because they doubt of their sincerity and salvation, they are more sustained and comforted with that little discerning which they have of their evidences, and with their hopes of the everlasting love of God, than they could by all your sin-

ful pleasures. Try the most dejected, mournful Christian, whether he would change states and comforts with the best and greatest of the ungodly. The soul of man is so active and comprehensive, that it can at once both rejoice and mourn. While they mourn for sin, and feel affliction, believers can have some rejoicing taste of everlasting life.

8. Yea, the godly sorrow of a believer is the matter of his joy. He is gladder when his heart will melt for sin, than he would be to be your partner in your carnal pleasures. He would not change the comfort that he findeth in his penitent tears for all your laughter.

9. The joy of a believer is intimate and solid, as I said before, according to the object of it, and not like the fleeing of a fool, or the laughter of a child, or the sensual mirth that Solomon called madness. And therefore it is not so discernible to others as carnal mirth is. And therefore you think that the servants of Christ are void of pleasure when they have much more than you. It is little ridiculous accidents and toys that make men laugh; but great things give us an inward, sweet content and joy, which scorns to shew itself by laughter. And what can be a fitter object of such great content, than to be a member of Christ, and an heir of heaven?

10. Moreover, this sorrow of the godly is but medicinal, and a preparative to their after joys. It doth but work out the poison of sin, which would mar their comforts, and drive them to Christ, and fit them to value him, and taste the sweetness of his love and grace.

11. And as it is not the state and life of a Christian, but his fasting-days, or time of physic, so the comforts of the godly ordinarily do far exceed their sorrows, at least in weight, if not in passionate sense. They have their hours of sweet access to God, and of heavenly meditation, and delightful remembrance of the experiences of his love, and perusal of his promises, and communion with his people; and of the exercise of faith, and hope, and love. And with those Christians that have attained stability and strength, these comforting graces are predominant; and their life is more in love and praise, than in vexatious fears and sorrows. And it should be so with all believers. Love is the heart of the new creature. It is a life of love, and joy, and praise, that Christ calls all his people to; and forbids them all unnecessary

doubts and sorrows ; and keepeth them up so strictly from sin, that he may prevent their sorrows. And if you will judge whether holiness be a pleasant course, you must go to the prescript, and consider the nature and use of holiness, and look at those that live according to the mercies of the Gospel ; and not look at the dejections and sorrows of those that grieve themselves by swerving from the way of holiness ; as if you would judge that health is unpleasant because you hear a sick man groan. And yet even these weak and mournful Christians usually have more joy than you. The very preservation of their souls from that despair which sin would cast them into if they had not a Christ to fly to, and the little tastes of mercy which they have felt, and the revivings that they find between their sorrows and the hopes they have of better days, are enough to weigh down all your pleasures, and all their own sorrows.

12. Lastly, consider that this is not the life of perfect joy, and therefore some sorrows will be intermixed. Comfort will not be perfect till holiness be perfect ; and till we arrive at the place of perfect joy. What is wanting now while we live in a troublesome, malignant world, shall shortly be made up in the heavenly Jerusalem, when we have admittance into our Master's joy. And then all the world shall be easily convinced, whether sin or duty, a fleshly or a holy life, hath the greater pleasures and contents.

Object. 'But it is not only the weakness of professors, but the very way that is prescribed them, that must bear the blame. For they are commanded to fast, and weep, and mourn.'

Ans. 1. That is but with a medicinal necessary sorrow, for preventing of a greater sorrow. As bitter medicines and bloodletting, and strict diet, are for the prevention of death. God first commandeth them to take heed of sin, the cause of sorrow. But if they will fall and break their bones, they must endure the pain of setting them again.

2. And doth not Christ command his servants also to rejoice ? and again rejoice, and always to rejoice ? Phil. iii. 1. iv. 4. 1 Thess. v. 16. Doth he not command them to live in the most delightful works of love and joy, and thankful mention of his mercies ? I tell you, if Christians did but live as God requireth them, and by his plenteous mercies doth encourage them to live, they would be the wonder of the world

for their exceeding joy ; they would triumph as men that are entering into rest, and make the miserable, ungodly princes and great ones in the world observe their low, contemptible condition, and see by the comfort of believers, that there are far higher joys than theirs to be attained. Did Christians live as God would have them, according to their dignity and felicity, they would make the world admire the spirit, and hopes, and comforts that do so transport them. They would be so taken up in the love and praise of their Redeemer, that they would scarce have leisure to observe whether they be rich or poor, or to regard the honours or dishonours of the world. These little things would scarce find room in their affection, they would be taken up so much with God. If they were sore with scourging, and their feet were in the stocks, they would there sing forth the praise of him that hath assured them of their deliverance and everlasting joy, as Paul and Silas did, Acts xvi. They would rejoice in poverty, in disgrace, in pain, and nothing would be able to overcome their joy. They would pity the tyrants and sensual epicures that have no sweeter pleasures than those that the flesh and this deceitful world affords. O the joy that believers would have in their secret prayers ! in their heavenly meditations ! in their holy conference ! in the reading of the promises ! and much more in their public praises and communion, if they did but follow more fully the conduct of that Spirit that hath undertaken to be their comforter ! What makes believers slight this world, and take all your pleasures to be unworthy of their entertainment or regard, but that they have had a taste of sweeter things, and by faith are overgrown these childish vanities ? If God and his favour be better than such worms as we, and the heavenly glory better than these transitory toys, you may well conceive that the believer's joy, that is fed by these, must be greater (at least in worth and weight) than all the pleasures of this sublunary world. If therefore you love a life of pleasure, come over to Christ, and live a holy, heavenly life ; and believe one that hath made some trial, yea believe the Lord himself, that holiness is the only pleasant life.

And now as we have seen it plainly proved, that the life of holiness is the most pleasant life, so from hence we may see two sorts reprov'd, that (in different measures) are found to be transgressors.

The first is, those blind ungodly wretches, that can find no pleasure in a holy life, when they can find pleasure in their worldly drudgery, and in their sensual uncleanness, and their childish vanities. They have the God of infinite goodness to delight in; but to their impious hearts he seemeth not delightful. They have his power, and wisdom, and holiness, and truth to love, and admire, and trust upon, and his excellent works to behold him in, and his holy laws, and gracious promises to meditate on; but they have small delight in any such employment. They have leave as well as any others to open their hearts to God in secret, and in prayer and praise to recreate their souls, and to hold communion with the saints of God, and to be exercised both in public and private in his worship, and to order their families in his fear, and to manage their affairs according to his word; but they find no pleasure in such a life as this, but are as backward to it as if it were a toilsome and unprofitable business, and are weary of that little outside worship which they do perform. They have heaven set before them to seek after, and to make their portion and delight, but they have small delight to think or speak of it. Their hearts are unsuitable to these high, holy and spiritual things. They are matters that they are strange to, and have no firm and confident belief of, but an uncertain, wavering, weak opinion: and therefore they are too far off to be their delight. "They say to God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy way. What is the Almighty that we should serve him? and what profit should we have if we pray unto him?" Job xxi. 14, 15. If they do come to the public assemblies, and join there in the outward part of worship, they find little life and pleasure in it, because they are strangers to the reward and spiritual part, which is the kernel. They look more at the preacher's gifts, and the manner of his doctrine and delivery, than at the spiritual necessary matter that is delivered. They have some pleasure in a neat composed speech, that seemeth not to accuse them any more than others, and grateth not on their tender ears with plain and necessary truth; but suffers them to go home as quietly as they came thither. But if the preacher touch them to the quick, and endeavour faithfully to acquaint them with themselves; or if he have no eloquence or accurateness of speech to please them with, but be guilty of any unhand-

someness of expression, or modal imperfections, they are weary of hearing him, and think it long till the glass be run, and perhaps instead of tasting the sweetness of wholesome truth, they make it the matter of their derision and contempt.

But let them be at cards or dice, at hawking or hunting, or at any idle sports and vanities, and they can hold out longer with delight. At drinking, or feasting, or idle talking, they are not so weary. Yea, in the labours of their calling, when their bodies are weary, their minds are more unwearied; and in their fields and shops they have more delight than in the spiritual, holy service of the Lord. They are never so merry as when there is least of God upon their hearts and in their ways. And it is one of the reasons that hindereth their conversion, lest it should deprive them of their mirth, and cause them to spend the remainder of their days in uncomfortable heaviness. If sin were not sweet to them, conversion would be more easy. The pleasure which they find in creatures by their sin, is the prison and fetters of their soul's captivity. If this be thy case that readest these lines, I beseech thee lay to heart these following aggravations of thy sin.

1. How blind and wicked is the heart that can find more pleasure in sin than holiness! Is the creature pleasant to thee, and God unpleasant? What a shame is this to thy understanding and thy will! It proclaimeth thy pernicious folly and impiety. If thou hadst no more wit than to be pleased more with stones than gold, with dung than meat, with shameful nakedness than clothing, thou wouldst not be judged wise enough to be left to thy own dispose and government. But the folly which thou dost manifest, is unspeakably greater. Darkness is not so much worse than light, and death is not so much worse than life, as sin is worse than holiness, and the world than God. And is the worst more pleasant to thee than the best? It is a fool indeed, to whom "it is a sport to do mischief;" (Prov. x. 23.) and so great a mischief as sin is; and yet hath no delight in understanding; chap. xviii. 2. "Delight is not seemly for such fools;" chap. xix. 10.

And how wicked is that heart as well as blind, that is so averse to God and holiness! Doth not this shew thee, 1. the absence of God's holy image? 2. And the presence of satan's image upon thy soul?

Nothing doth more certainly prove what a man is, than

the complacency and displacency of his heart. If you know what it is in yourselves or others, that pleaseth and displeaseth most, you may certainly know whether you have the spirit and grace of Christ or not. This is the durable, infallible evidence, which satan shall never be able to invalidate, and which the weakest Christians can scarce tell how to deny in themselves. Could they be more holy, it would please them better than to be more rich. Could they believe more, and love God more, and trust him more, and obey him better, it would please them more than if you gave them all the honours of the world. They are never so well pleased with their own hearts, as when they find them nearest heaven, and have most of the knowledge of God, and impress of his attributes, and sense of his presence. They are never so well pleased with their lives, as when they are most holy and fruitful, and may most fully be called "a walking with God." They are never so much displeased with themselves, as when they find least of God upon their hearts, and are most dark and dull, and indisposed to holy communion with him. They are never so much weary of themselves, as when their lives are least fruitful, holy, and exact. And this is a certain evidence of their sincerity. For it shews what they love, and what it is that hath their hearts or wills. And it is the heart or will that is the man in God's account. God takes a man to be what he sincerely would be. As he is, so he loveth and willeth; and as he loveth and willeth, such he is. His complacency or displacency are the immediate sure discoveries of his bent or inclination. This certain evidence poor doubting souls should have oft recourse to, and improve.

And on the contrary, it is as sure an evidence of your misery, when you "savour not the things of the Spirit" (Rom. viii. 5—7.), and when it pleaseth you more to be great, than to be good; to be rich, than to be religious and righteous; to serve your lusts, than to serve the Lord. When you set more by the applause of men, than by the approbation of God; and had rather be far from God than near him, and be excused from a holy life than used to it, and constant in it. When you take the world and sin for your recreation or delight, and a godly life for a melancholy, wearisome, and unpleasant course. This certainly shews that you have yet the old corrupted nature, and serpentine enmity against the Spirit and life of Christ, and are yet in the flesh, and therefore

can no more please the Lord, than his holy ways are pleasing unto you (Rom. viii. 6—8.), and it proveth that you are yet in the gall of bitterness, and the bonds of your iniquity, and that your hearts are not right in the sight of God, and that you are the slaves of satan, whose nature you partake of by which you are thus alienated from the Lord.

Didst thou know God as Faith doth know him, his lovingkindness would be better to thee than life itself; Psal. lxi. 3. If thou didst love him (as it is like thou wilt pretend thou dost), it would be meat and drink to thee to enjoy his love, and do his will. And if thou know him not by faith, nor cleavest to him by unfeigned love, how canst thou pretend to have his image?

How would you judge of that man's heart, that were no better affected to his friend, to his parents or children, or other relations, than you manifest yourselves to be to God? If he can take no pleasure in the company of his wife or children, but is glad when he is far from them, in the company of strangers, or harlots, or prodigals, would you not say this man had a base, unmanly disposition? Express but such an inclination in plain words, and try how honest, sober men will judge of them. Much more would it be odious to Christian ears, if you should tell God plainly, We can find no pleasure in thee, or in thy holy ways; thy word and service are unsavoury and wearisome unto us. We had rather be talking or busied about the matters of the world. We have far more pleasure in recreations and sensual accommodations, than in remembering thee and thy kingdom, and than we find in the life that is called holy. Would not such words as these be called impious by every Christian that should hear them? And is not that an impious heart then, which speaketh thus or is thus affected, and that an impious life that manifesteth it, though dissembling lips are ashamed to profess it.

If God be not more to be loved and delighted in than any thing, or all things else, he is not God. If heaven and holiness be not sweeter than all the pleasures of earth and sin, let them have no more such honourable names. Let sin and earth then be called heaven; but woe to them that have no better.

2. What monstrous ingratitude is that man guilty of, that when God hath provided, and Christ hath purchased such high delights, and freely tendered them to unworthy sinners,

will say, I find no pleasure in them, and take them for no delights at all? When the Lord beheld thee wallowing in thy filth, and laughing in thy misery, and making a sport of thine own perdition, he pitied thee, and provided and offered to thee the most noble and excellent delights, that thy nature is capable of enjoying. And wilt thou cast them back unthankfully in his face, and say, They are unpleasant, tedious things? If your child did so by his meat or clothes, yea or a beggar at your door did so by his alms, you would think it proved his great unworthiness. If he throw away the best you can give him, and say, It is naught, there is no sweetness in it, would you not think it fit that want should help to mend his relish, and cure his ingratitude? And will you do so yourselves by Christ and holiness, and say as those, Mal. i. 13. "What a weariness is it!" Take heed lest you provoke the Lord to cast you into a state in which you shall have more cause to be weary. If you are weary of reading, and praying, and hearing, and other holy exercises, and weary of heartsearching, penitent meditations, will you not be more weary of hellfire, and of the dolorous reviews of this your folly, and of the endless, easeless, remediless sense of the wrath of God, and gripes of your own self-tormenting consciences! How just is it with God to give those men somewhat that they have cause to be weary of, that will be thus weary of his sweetest service, and reject the greatest mercies he can offer them, as if they were some burdensome worthless things!

3. Will you have any pleasure at all, or will you have none? If any, in what then will you place it, and whence will you expect it, if not from God in a holy life? If God be thy trouble, what then is fit to be thy delight? Darest thou say in thy heart or with thy tongue, that sin and sensuality is better? Darest thou say that a good bargain, or other worldly gain, or cards, or dice, or other sports, or ease, or good cheer, or an alehouse, or a whore, are pleasanter things than walking with thy God in faith and holiness, and expectation of the everlasting joys? Heaven and earth shall bear witness against thee, and common reason shall bear witness against thee, for this inhuman, impious folly and ingratitude, if ever thou appear at the bar of God, with the guilt of such unreasonable sin. What! is God no better in thine eyes, than a filthy, brutish, sinful pleasure? And is the love of God no

sweeter a work than the love of sensual delights? Saith blessed Augustine, "He that will sell or exchange his soul for transitory commodities, doth censure Christ to be a foolish merchant, that knew no better what he did, when he gave his life for those souls, that you will not lose a sin for." So I may say here. Hath Christ bought for you holy and everlasting pleasures, at the price of his own most bitter pains, and precious blood, and do you now think them no better than your fleshly, bestial delights? Is it Christ or you, think you, that is mistaken in the value of them? Did he shed his blood to purchase you that which is not worth the parting with a cup of drink for, or the parting with your pleasure or unjust commodity for? Sure he that judgeth thus of Christ, is far from believing in him, with any true Christian, saving faith.

4. If you can find no pleasure in God, and in a holy life, you may be sure that he will have no pleasure in you. Wonder not if you find in your greatest need, that you are abhorred and loathed by the Lord, when you loathed the very thoughts and mention of him, in the day of your visitation. Marvel not if the Most Holy God do take no pleasure in a loathsome sinner, when the sinner is so ungodly, that he takes more pleasure in the most sordid, fading trifles than in God. You may offer the sacrifice of your heartless, hypocritical prayers and praises unto God, and he will count them abomination, and cast them back as dung into your faces, and tell you that he hath no pleasure in the sacrifice of such fools. Read in his own words, Prov. xv. 8. and xxi. 27. Isa. i. 13. Eccles. v. 4. As you are weary of serving him, so he is weary of your services, and it is a "trouble to him to hear them; and when you spread forth your hands he will hide his eyes from you, yea when you make many prayers he will not hear;" Isa. i. 14, 15. When the Jews offered their deceitful sacrifices, and said, "Behold what a weariness is it!" God sent them word that he hath no pleasure in them, nor would regard their persons, nor accept a sacrifice at their hands (Mal. i. 8—10), and their solemn feasts he counteth dung. And dung would be no acceptable present or feast to yourselves, if it were offered you instead of meat; Mal. ii. 3. "My soul (saith the Lord) loathed them, and their soul abhorred me;" Zech. xi. 8. As he "that despiseth him shall be slighted by him" (1 Sam. ii. 30.), so he that loatheth him,

shall be loathed by him. "If any man draw back (saith the Lord) my soul shall have no pleasure in him;" Heb. x. 38.) "For he is not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with him: the foolish shall not stand in his sight: he hateth all workers of iniquity;" Psal. v. 4, 5. And little do you now imagine what a horror it will be to you in the day of your extremity, for God to tell you that he hath no pleasure in you. When you look before you into an eternity of woe, which you have no hope to escape but by the mercy of the Lord, and he shall dash that hope by telling you that he hath no pleasure in you, it will give your souls the deadly wound that never shall be healed. In vain then shall you wish that you had chosen in time the durable delights, and not the pleasures of filthy sin for so short a season; and to your torment you shall know whether God or the world was more worthy of your sweetest affections and delights; and how deservedly they are "all damned that obey not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness;" 2 Thess. ii. 12. "Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them;" Rom. i. 32. If you will count it your pleasure to riot in the day-time, rather than to walk and work by the light, you must look to receive the due reward of such unrighteousness; 2 Pet. ii. 13. If it be your sport to sin, and to do mischief (Prov. x. 13.), you shall have small sport in suffering the punishment of your wilful folly.

5. If God and holiness seem not pleasant to you, then heaven itself cannot seem pleasant to you, if you consider it truly as it is. For the heavenly felicity consisteth in the perfection of our holiness, and the perfect fruition of God himself, by sight, and love, and joy for ever. If the little holiness be unpleasant and irksome to you which appeareth in the imperfect saints on earth, what pleasure could you take in that supereminent holiness which is the state and work of the celestial inhabitants? If the thoughts and mention of God be unpleasant to you, and his holy praises do seem to you as matters of no delight, what then would you do in heaven where this must be your everlasting work? And if heaven seem a place of toil and trouble to you, how just will it be that you are everlastingly shut out? How can you for shame beg of God to glorify you, when you take

the glory that he hath promised for a misery? If you think that there is a heaven of such sensual pleasures as you desire, or that any shall be saved that only choose heaven as a less and more tolerable misery than hell, you will shortly find your expectations deceived.

Lay all these five Considerations together, and you may perceive what miserable souls those are, that can find pleasure in the perishing trifles of the world, and none in a holy heavenly life. Be assured of this whosoever thou art, that if God and heaven, and a holy life, be not a thousand times sweeter and more delightful to thee, than any thing that this world can afford to thy contentment, it is not for want of matter of superabundant delight to be found in God and in his holy ways; but it is for want of reason, or faith, or consideration, or a suitable heart in thee, which may make thee fit to know and taste the pleasures which now thou art unacquainted with. And is it not a pity that such infinite delights should be set before men, and they should lose them all for want of a heart and appetite to them? and should perish by choosing the lowest vanities before them?

I do therefore earnestly beseech thee that readest these words, if thou be one of these unhappy souls, that canst find no pleasure in God and holiness, that thou wouldst speedily observe and lament that blindness and wickedness of thy heart, that is the cause of this infatuation and corruption of thine apprehension and rational appetite; and that thou would presently apply thyself to Christ for the cure of it. To which end I advise thee to these following means.

Direct. 1. If you would taste the pleasure of a holy life, bethink you better of the necessity and excellency of it; and cast away your prejudice and false conceits, which have deceived you, and turned your minds against it. A child may be deluded to take his own father for his enemy, if he see him in an enemy's garb, or be persuaded by false suggestions that he hateth him. A man may be persuaded to hate his meat, if you can but make him believe that it is poison: or to hate his clothes, if you can but make him believe they are infected with the plague. If you will suffer your understandings to be deluded, so far as to overlook the amiable nature of holiness, and to think the image of God is but a fancy, or that a heavenly life is nothing but hypocrisy, and that it is but pride that maketh men seek to be holier than

others, and that makes them they cannot go quietly to hell in despite of the commands and mercies of the Lord, as others do. I say, if the devil, the great deceiver, can possess you with such frantic thoughts as these, what wonder if you hate the very name of holiness? How can you find pleasure in the greatest good, while you take it for an evil? If you will believe all that the devil and his foolish malicious instruments say of God and of a holy life, you shall never love God, nor see any loveliness, or taste any sweetness in his service.

Direct. 2. Come near and search into the inwards of a holy life, and try it a little while yourselves, if you would taste the pleasure of it: and do not stand looking on it at a distance, where you see nothing but the outside; nor judge by bare hearsay which giveth you no taste or relish of it. The sweetness of honey, or wine, or meat is not known by looking on it, but by tasting it. Come near and try what it is to live in the love of God, and in the belief and hope of life eternal, and in universal obedience to the laws of Christ, and then tell us how these things do relish with you. You will never know the sweetness of them effectually, as long as you are but lookers on. It was the similitude which Peter Martyr used in a sermon which converted the noble Neapolitan Marquis of Vicum, Galeacius Caracciolus, who forsook wife, and children, and honours, and lands, and country, and all, for the liberty of the reformed religion of Geneva. Saith he, ‘ If you see the motion of dancers afar off, and hear not the music, you will think they are frantic. But when you come near and hear the music, and observe their harmonical, orderly motion, you will take delight in it, and desire to join with them.’ So men that judge at a distance of the truth and holy ways of God, by the slanderous reports of malignant men, will think of the godly, as Festus of Paul, that they are beside themselves; but if they come among them, and search more impartially into the reasons of their course, and specially if they join with them in the inwards and vital actions of religion, they will then be quickly of another mind, and not go back for all the pleasures or profits of the world. In the works of nature (and sometimes of art) the outside is so far from shewing you the excellencies, that it is but a comely veil to hide them. Though you would have a handsome cover for your watch, yet doth it but hide the well-ordered frame, and useful motions that are within. You must open

it, and there observe the parts and motions if you would pass a right judgment of the work. You would have a comely cover for your books; but it is but to hide the well composed letters from your sight, in which the sense, and use, and excellency doth consist. You must open it, if you will read it and know the worth of it. A common spectator when he seeth a rose or other flower or fruit-tree, thinketh he hath seen all, or the chiefest part. But it is the secret, unsearchable motions and operations of the vegetative life and juice within, by which the beauteous flowers and sweet fruits are produced, and wonderfully differenced from each other that are the excellent part and mysteries in these natural works of God. Could you but see these secret inward causes and operations, it would incomparably more content you. He that passeth by and looketh on a beehive, and seeth but the cover, and the laborious creatures going in and out, doth see nothing of the admirable operations within, which God hath taught them. Did you there see how they make their wax and honey, and compose their combs, and by what laws, and in what order their commonwealth is governed, and their work carried on, you would know more than the outside of the hive can shew you. So it is about the life of godliness. If you saw the inward motions of the quickening spirit upon the soul, and the order and exercise of every grace, and by what laws the thoughts and affections are governed, and to whom they tend, you would then see more of the beauty of religion than you can see by the outward behaviour of our assemblies. The shell is not sweet, but serves to hide the sweeter part from those that will not storm those walls, that they may possess it as their prize. The kernel of religion is covered with a shell so hard that flesh and blood cannot break it. Hard sayings, and hard providences to the church, and to particular believers, are such as many cannot break through, and therefore never taste the sweetness. The most admired feature and beauty of any of your bodies (which fools think to be the most excellent part of the body) is indeed but the handsome, well-adorned case that God by nature doth cover his more excellent inward works with. Were you but able to see within that skin, and but once to observe the wonderful motions, heart, and brain, and the course of the blood in the veins and arteries, and the several fermentations, and the causes and nature of chylications, and sanguifications,

and the spirits, and senses, and all their works : and if you saw the reason of every part and vessel in this wondrous frame, and the causes and nature of every disease ; much more if you saw the excellent nature and operations of that rational soul, that is the glory of all, you would then say that you had seen a more excellent sight than the smooth and beauteous skin that covers it. The invisible soul is of greater excellency than all the visible beauties in the world. So also if you would know the excellencies of religion, you must not stand without the doors, or judge of it by the skin and shell, but you must come near, and look into the inward reasons of it, and think of the difference between the high employments of a saint, and the poor and sordid drudgery of the ungodly ; between walking with God in desire and love, and in the spiritual use of his ordinances and creatures, and conversing only with sinful men, and transitory vanities ; between the life of faith and hope, which is daily maintained by the foresight of everlasting glory, and a life of mere nature, and worldliness, and sensuality, and idle compliment and pomp, which are but the progenitors of sorrow, and end in endless desperation. Come near, and try the power of God's laws, and of the workings of his Spirit : and think in good sadness of the place where you must live for ever, and the glory you shall see, and the sweet enjoyment and employment you shall have in the presence of the eternal Majesty : and think well of all the sweet contrivances and discoveries of his love in Christ ; and how freely they are offered to you ; and how certainly they may be your own ; peruse the promises, and sweet expressions of love and grace ; and exercise your souls in serious meditation, prayer, thanksgiving, and praise ; and withal remember, that none but these will be durable delights ; and tell me whether a life of sport and pride, and worldliness, and flesh-pleasing, or a life of faith and holiness be the better, the sweeter, and more pleasant life.

Direct. 3. If you would taste the pleasures of a holy life, you must apply yourself to Christ in the use of his appointed means, for the renewing of your natures ; that his Spirit may give you a new understanding and a new heart, to discern and relish spiritual things : for your old corrupted minds and hearts will never do it. They are unsuitable to the things of God, and therefore cannot receive them nor savour them, nor be subject to the holy laws ; 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15.

Rom. viii. 5—8. The appetite and relish of every living creature is agreeable to its nature. A fish hath small pleasure in the dry land, nor a bird in the deeps of water; grass and water is sweeter to an ox than our most delicate meats and drinks. Corruption and custom have made you so vicious, that your natures are not such as God made them at the first, when he himself was man's desire and delight; but they are now inclined to sensual things, being captivated by the fleshly part, and have contracted a strangeness and enmity to God. And therefore those hearts will never relish the sweetnesses of a life of faith and holiness, till faith and holiness be planted in them, and they be born again by regenerating grace. For that "which is born of the flesh is flesh," (and but flesh; and therefore doth reach no higher than a fleshly inclination can move it:) "and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit;" and therefore will relish and love things spiritual.

Direct. 4. Lastly, if you would taste the pleasures of a holy life, you must forbear those sinful fleshly pleasures, which now you are so taken up with. For these are they that infatuate your understandings, and corrupt your appetites, and make the sweetest things seem loathsome to you. As the using of vain sports and filthy lusts abroad, doth make such persons weary of their own relations, and families, and business at home; so all the glutting of the mind with vanity, and using yourselves to sinful pleasures is it that turns your hearts from God, and maketh his word and ways unsavoury to you. You must first with the prodigal, Luke xv., be brought into a famine of your former pleasures, be denied the very husk, and then you will remember that the meanest servant in your Father's house, is in a far better case than you, having bread enough, while you perish through hunger. And hence it is that God doth so often promote the work of conversion by affliction; and by the same means carrieth on the work of grace in most that he will save. Cannot you tell how to leave your sensual pleasures? What will you do when sickness makes you weary of them? Weary of your meat, and drink, and bed? weary to hear talk of that which now doth seem so sweet; and to say, I have no pleasure in them? Cannot you spare your friends, your sports, your bravery, your wealth, and other carnal accom-

modations? What will you say of them, when pain disgraceth them, and convinceth you of their insufficiency to stand you in any stead? These things that you are now so loath to leave, may shortly become such a load to your souls, as undigested meat to the stomach that is sick, that you can have no ease till you have cast them off.

Away therefore with these luscious vanities betimes, which vitiate your appetites, and put them out of relish with the things that are truly pleasant. O what a shame it is to hear a man say, 'I shall never endure so godly, and spiritual, and strict a life;' when he can endure and take pleasure in a life of sin! You may more wisely lie down in the dunghill or the ditch, and say, 'I shall never endure a cleaner diet;' or company only with enemies and wild beasts, and say, 'I shall never endure the company of my friends.' What! is God worse than the creature, and heaven than earth? and so much worse, as not to be endured in your thoughts and affections in comparison of them? You will never know your friends till you forsake these deceivers! Nor ever know the pleasures of a holy life, till you will let go the poisonous pleasures of sin. And then you may find that sanctification destroyeth not, but changeth and recovereth your delights, and giveth you safety for the greatest peril, health for sickness, friends for enemies, gold for dross, life for death, and the foretastes of rest for tiring vexation.

2. The second sort that are hence to be reprov'd, are those weak and troubled servants of the Lord, that live as sadly as if they found more grief than pleasure in the ways of God.

Indeed it is to be lamented that few of the heirs of life do live according to the happiness and dignity of their calling; nor are the great things that God hath done for them so apparent in the cheerfulness and comforts of their lives as they should be. But some that are addicted to dejectedness, do in a greater measure wrong Christ and themselves, being always feeding upon secret griefs, and torturing themselves with doubts and fears, and acquainted with almost no other language but lamentations, self-accusations, and complaints. These poor souls usually discover honest hearts, that are weary of sin, and low in their own eyes, and long to be better, and do not disregard the matters of their salvation as dead-hearted ungodly sinners do. Their complaints

shew what they would be ; and what they would be sincerely, that they are in God's account. But yet they live so far below the sweet delights which they might partake of, and so far below the provisions of their Father's house, and the riches of the Gospel, that they have cause to lament their excessive lamentations, and more cause to reform this sad distemper, and no cause to indulge it, as usually such do. And though with the most of them some natural passions and weaknesses, and some melancholy distempers are so much the cause, as may much excuse them ; yet because it is an evil which must be disowned, and reason must be the means, where people have the free use of reason, I shall lay down some of the great inconveniencies of this sad distemper, and beseech those that tender the honour of God, and would do that which is most pleasing to him, and love not their own calamity, that they will soberly consider of what I say, and labour to regulate their minds accordingly.

1. I desire the dejected Christian to consider, that by his heavy and uncomfortable life, he seemeth to the world to accuse God and his service, as if he openly called him a rigorous, hard, unacceptable Master, and his work a sad unpleasant thing. I know this is not your thoughts : I know it is yourselves, and not God and his service that offendeth you ; and that you walk heavily not because you are holy, but because you fear you are not holy, and because you are no more holy. I know it is not of grace, but for grace that you complain. But do you not give too great occasion to ignorant spectators to judge otherwise ? If you see a servant always sad, that was wont to be merry while he served another master, will you not think that he hath a master that displeaseth him ? If you see a woman live in continual heaviness ever since she was married, that lived merrily before, will you not think that she hath met with an unpleasant match ? You are born and new born for God's honour ; and will you thus dishonour him before the world ? What do you (in their eyes) but dispraise him by your very countenance and carriage, while you walk before him in so much heaviness ? The child that still cries when you put on his shoes, doth signify that they pinch him ; and he dispraiseth his meat that makes a sour face at it ; and he dispraiseth his friend, that is always sad and troubled in his company. He that should say of God, ' Thou art bad, or cruel, and unmer-

ciful,' should blaspheme. And so would he that saith of holiness, 'It is a bad, unpleasant, hurtful state.' How then dare you do that which is so like to such blaspheming, when you should abstain from all appearance of evil? 1 Thess. v. 22. Canst thou find in thy heart thus to dishonour and wrong the God whom thou so much esteemest, and the grace which thou so much desirest? For a wicked man that is far from God, to go heavily or roar in the horror of his soul, is a shame to his sin, but no dishonour to God and holiness. But for you that are near him, in relation, engagement, and attendance, to walk so heavily, reflects on him to whom you are related, and from whom you look for your reward.

2. Consider also, what a lamentable hindrance you are hereby to the conversion and salvation of souls? Your countenances and sad complainings do affright men from the service of the Lord, and as it were call to them, to keep off and fly from the way that you find so grievous. You gratify satan, the enemy of Christ, and holiness, and souls, and become his instruments (though against your wills) to affright men from the way of life. As the Papists keep their deluded proselytes abroad from truth and reformation, by giving them odious descriptions of the Protestants, as if they were heretics, proud, frantic, mad, and scarcely men, and when they burn them, they adorn them with pictures of the devil; even so doth satan keep poor souls from entertaining Christ and truth, and entering the holy paths, by making them believe that the servants of Christ are a company of distempered, melancholy souls, and that godliness is the way to make men mad; and that he that will set his heart on heaven, must never look more for a merry, comfortable life on earth. Hence comes the proverb of the malignant formalists and profane, that 'A Puritan is a Protestant frightened out of his wits.' And will you confirm this slander of the devil and his instruments? Will you entice men to believe him! Will you make yourselves such pictures of unhappiness, and wear such a visor of calamity and misery, as shall frighten all that look on you and observe you, and discourage them from the way which they see accompanied with so much sorrow? As you hang up dead crows in your field to frighten the rest from the corn, and as murderers are hanged in irons to terrify all that see them from that crime, or as the heads of traitors are set up to the same end, as pro-

claiming to all passengers, ' Thus must you be used, if you will do as they ;' just so would satan fill you with terrors, and overwhelm you with grief, and distract you with causeless doubts and fears, that you may appear to the world a miserable sort of people ; and then all that look on you will be afraid of godliness, and think they see as it were written in your foreheads, ' Such drooping pitiful creatures must all be, that will lead so precise and heavenly a life.' Do you think your carnal neighbours and acquaintance will not be deterred from a holy life, when they see that since you turned to it, you do nothing but complain, and droop, and mourn, as if you were worse than you were before ? And was it not enough that you hindered their conversion before, when you were in your ignorance and sin, by your wicked examples and encouragements, but you must hinder it still by your dejected, discouraging countenances and conversations ? Yea, perhaps your later excessive troubles may do more to hinder their conversion, than your persuasions and examples did before. And can you find in your hearts to lay such a stumblingblock as this in the way of your miserable acquaintance, to keep them from salvation ? Will it not grieve you to think that you should have so great a hand in men's damnation, even since you are returned to God yourselves ? I know by your sorrows and complaints, that the perdition of a soul is no small matter in your eyes. O therefore take heed of that which may procure it. The use that satan would have you make of these very words is, to go away with more dejection, and to say, ' What a wretch am I ? even unmeet to live, that by my griefs am not only miserable myself, but also hinder the salvation of others.' And thus he would draw thee to grieve over all thy griefs again and because thou hast exceeded in thy sorrows, to be more excessive ; and so to add one sin unto another ; and to do more, because you have done too much. So that grief is all that he can allow thee ; and one grief shall be made the reason of another, that thou mayest run thus in a round of misery, and stop in grieving, and go no further : whereas thou shouldst so grieve for such grief, as may call thee off, and stay thy grieving ; and thy repenting should be the cure and forsaking of thy sin, and not the renewal of it.

But on the other side, if thou couldst live a heavenly joyful life, that the glory of thy hopes might appear in thy coun-

tenance, thy conference, and conversation, how many might hereby be drawn to Christ, and caused to think well of the ways of God? Did the godly but exceed the rest of the world, in holy joy and cheerfulness of mind, as much as they exceed them in happiness and in the causes of true joy, what an honour would it be to Christ and holiness, and what an attractive to win the ignorant to embrace the motions of salvation! How easily would they let go their sinful pleasures, their gluttony, and drunkenness, and filthiness, and gaming, if they did but see by the carriage of believers, that they were like to exchange them for much greater joys? You cannot expect that ignorant men, that never tried a holy life, and have a natural enmity against it, should see the excellency of it immediately in itself; but they will judge of religion by the persons that profess it. That shall seem to them the best religion, that hath the best and happiest professors: and those seem to them the happiest and best, that have the greatest comforts, and conquer most the trouble of their minds. You can expect no other, but that country people, that know not the nature of medicines themselves, should judge of them by the success, and think that he followeth the best advice, who is most healthful, and of longest life. And so will the ignorant judge of the holy doctrine and commands of God, by the lives of those that seem to follow them. O therefore behave yourselves in the church of God, as those that remember that they live in the presence of a world of men, whose happiness or misery hath much dependance on your lives. If you were debating the case with a sensual wretch, would you not tell him that holiness is a state of greater pleasure than his sin? Tell him so then by your example, as well as by your words: let him see as well as hear of the confidence and comforts of true believers. Were Christianity exemplified in the lives of Christians, how excellent a state would it appear! were we but such as the holy doctrine and Christian pattern requireth us to be, even the blind, malicious world would be forced to admire the attainments of the saints: though they might hate them, yet they would admire them. Were we such as Stephen, that was full of faith and the Holy Ghost, and could stedfastly look up to heaven by faith, and see there the glory of the living God, and Jesus standing at his right hand, till we were raised to his boldness in defence of the truth, and his quiet submission

to the greatest sufferings, the world would not then be able to resist the wisdom and spirit by which we speak, but the faces of believers would sometimes appear to the terror of their persecutors as the faces of angels, as Acts vi. 5. 10. 15. vii. 51. 55, 56. 60. They are high and glorious things that are assured to us in the promises of the Gospel. Did but these things appear, in the stedfast faith, the confident hopes, desires, and joys of us that do expect them, believers then would be the wonder of the world; and our joys would so shame their dreaming, childish, brutish pleasures, that doubtless multitudes would flock in, to see what it is that so delighteth us, that they might be made partakers of our joys. Even as Simon Magus himself when he saw the miraculous gift of the Holy Ghost, would fain have bought that gift with money; so men that are yet carnal, in the gall of bitterness and bond of their iniquities, will yet see a desirable excellency in the joy of the Holy Ghost, and wish they were partakers of such joys, though yet they are unacquainted with the way to attain it.

I do therefore entreat you all that believe and hope for an everlasting crown, that you will shew the poor deceived world the preciousness of your faith and hopes, and the high prerogative of the saints, in your answerable cheerfulness and joy, and live not with dead and uncomfortable hearts, as those that have nothing but a vexatious, transitory world to comfort them; much less to be more dejected than these wretched souls. Do you not desire the conversion of your carnal friends, and all about you? Would you not be glad if you could further it? O that you would try this pleasant way! and shew them that you have found the invaluable treasure! And as the rich live in greater pomp, and at higher rates than the poor, so you that speak of the riches of grace, and live in the family of the Lord, O shew the world the dignity of your state, by your holy courage and comfortable behaviour, and by your living above the pleasures and griefs of unbelievers! When they glory in their prosperity, do you glory in the Lord: when they boast themselves in their riches or reputation, do you imitate holy David, who professeth, "I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord; the humble shall hear thereof and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name toge-

ther;" Psal. xxxiv. 1—3. And Psal. xlv. 8. "In God we boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever." By such spiritual joyfulness your lives would be a continued sermon; and you might thus preach home more souls to Christ, than the most excellent preacher by bare persuasions. Poor sinners would begin to pity themselves that live so far below the saints; and they would think with themselves, 'It is not for nothing that these men rejoice, and are comfortable even in the loss of all those things that we take all our comfort in!' For the honour of your dearest Lord, and for your own felicity, and for the sake of the miserable souls about you, I beseech you Christians do your best to reach this sweet and most joyful life, and to avoid those inordinate troubles and despondencies which are like to cross these blessed ends. And pray for me and the rest of his servants, that the Lord will forgive us our dishonouring his name, our wronging of our own souls, and our discouraging the world from living unto God, by our living so far below his mercies, and so unanswerable to the unspeakable treasures of his saints; and that for the time to come, we may lay this duty more to heart, and by the comforting Spirit may be elevated to the performance of it.

But I suppose some will say, 'To tell me how I should live for the encouragement of others is but to draw me to an hypocritical affectation and counterfeiting of joy and courage; as long as I am unable inwardly to rejoice, and can see no sufficient cause of my rejoicing in myself.'

Ans. 1. I shall by and by shew you that you have sufficient, yea, unspeakable cause of joy. 2. And now I shall only say that you are not to suspend and forbear your comfort, till you have full assurance of your own sincerity; your probabilities, and weakest faith, and hope, will warrant a more comfortable life than you can live. And it is not hypocrisy, but a necessary duty to do the outward actions that are here commanded us, though we cannot reach to that degree of inward comfort that we desire: for we do not hereby affirm ourselves to have the joy which we have not: (I am not persuading any man to lie :) but only we express as fully as we are able that little which we have. And a little indeed a very little of such a high and heavenly nature, grounded on the smallest hopes of everlasting life, will allow you in the expression of it, to transcend the greatest delights of the

ungodly. And as we do perform the external part, both as a commanded duty, and as a means to further the inward rejoicing of the soul; so outward solemnity and feasting in the days of thanksgiving, are as well to further inward joy, as to express it. Even as mean attire, and fasting, and humblest prostrations before the Lord, on days of humiliation, are as much to further inward humiliation as to express it. The behaviour of the body hath an operative reflection on the mind, and therefore should be used not only for the discovery, but for the cure of the soul. If you cannot restrain your anger as you desire, it is no hypocrisy, but your duty to hide it, and to refrain from the sinful effects. And if you can but use yourselves some time to behave yourselves in your anger, as if you had no anger, in meekness of speech and quietness of deportment, anger itself will be the more quickly subdued, and in time will be the more easily kept out. If you cannot restrain your inordinate appetite to meat or drink, for quality or quantity; it is yet no hypocrisy, but your duty, to hold your hands, and shut your mouths, and refrain the things to which you have an appetite. And if you will but use yourselves a convenient time to forbear the thing, you will subdue the appetite. If the drunkard will forbear the drink, and the glutton his too much desired dish, and the sportful gamesters their needless and sinful recreations, they will find that the fire of sensuality will go out, for want of fuel. As the too wanton poet saith concerning wanton love,

“Intrat amor mentes usu : dediscitur usu :
Qui poterit sanum fingere, sanus erit.”

Use kindleth it, and use quencheth it. He that can but live as a sound man, shall at last become a sound man. If you cannot overcome your inward pride as you desire, you must not therefore speak big, and look high, and swagger it out in bravery, and accompany with gallants, to avoid hypocrisy: but you must speak humbly, and be clothed soberly, and accompany with the humble. And 1. This is the performance of one part of your duty. 2. And it is the expression of your desires to be more humble, and consequently of some humility contained in these desires. 3. And it is the way to work your hearts to that humility which you want, or the way in which you must wait on God for the receiving

of it. So if you cannot overcome the love of the world as you desire, do not therefore forbear giving to the poor, for fear of hypocrisy ; but give the more, that you may perform so much of your duty as you can, and may the sooner overcome your worldly love. Some trees will be killed with often cropping. But if they will not, it is better that a poisonous plant should live only in the root, than sprout forth and be fruitful.

Even so, if you cannot overcome your inward doubts, and fears, and sorrows, as you desire, yet let them not be fruitful, nor cause you to walk so dejectedly before the world, as to dishonour God and your holy profession. And if you have not the inward comfort you desire, express your desires, and the hopes and smallest comforts that you have to the best advantage for your Master's honour. And you will find that a holy cheerfulness of countenance, expression, and deportment, will at last much overcome your inordinate disquietments, and much promote the joys which you desire. But yet that you may see cause for the cheerfulness to which I now exhort you, I next add,

3. If thou have but one spark of saving grace, it is not possible for thee now to conceive or express the happiness of thy state, and the cause thou hast to live a thankful, joyous life. If thou have no grace, thou art not the person I am now speaking to. If thou have no grace, whence is it that thou so much desirest it ? What is it that causeth thee to lament the want of it, and walk so heavily, but because thou art so much in doubt of it ? If thou truly love it, thou hast it, (for it is only grace that causeth an unfeigned love of grace). And if thou love it not, why canst not thou more quietly be without it ? Why dost thou make so much ado for it ? But if thou have it in the least degree, and so art born again of the Spirit, thou hast with it an unspeakable degree of delights. The God of life and love is thine ; the Lord Jesus Christ is thine ; the Spirit is thine ; the promises are thine ; and heaven itself is thine in title, and shall be thine in full perpetual possession. The God that made and ruleth all things, is reconciled to thee, and is thy Father ; having by grace in Christ adopted thee to be his Son ; Rom. v. 1, 2. 10, 11. viii. 1. 16, 17. Gal. iv. 6. 2 Cor. vi. 18. The Son of God is become thy Head, and thou art become a member of his body, as “ flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone (which no man ever yet hath hat-

ed); Ephes. v. 23. 27. 29, 30. Thou art become the temple and residence of the Holy Ghost. Thy title to heaven is incomparably more sure than any man's human title to his possessions or inheritance on earth. And what rejoicing can be too great for a man in thy condition? O what a life should that man live! with what sweet delight should he be transported, that hath the Spirit of Christ now living in him, to prepare him, and seal him up for an endless life with Christ! He that shall be shortly so full of glory, should not be empty now, when he remembereth what he must shortly be. Doth it beseech him now to dwell in grief, and refuse consolation, that must in a few days be swallowed up with joy? If thou that sittest here in heaviness, wert assured that shortly thou shouldst be with Christ, and made a blessed companion of angels, and possessed of thy Master's joy, a joy that hath no bounds or ends, would not thy conscience then tell thee, that thou greatly wrongest such abundant mercy, in that thou art no more affected with it? and that thy want of joy doth express thy too much want of thankfulness. Dost thou sit there like a child of God, like an heir of heaven, and a co-heir with Christ? Rom. viii. 16, 17. Doth that sorrowful heart, and that dejected countenance become one that must live with Christ for ever, in such resplendent glory as thou must do; and that hast but a few more days to live, till thou takest possession of these endless joys? The Lord pardon and heal our unbelief. Did faith more effectually play its part, as it is the evidence of things not seen, and withdraw the veil, and shew us, though but in a glass, the glory which we must see with open face, it would be wine to our hearts, and oil to our countenances, and make our poverty, sickness, and death, more comfortable than the wealth, and health, and life of the ungodly.

I know you will say still, that you could rejoice if you were sure all this were yours; but when you rather think you have no part in it, it can be but small comfort to you.

Ans. 1. But who is it long of that you have still such fears? Have you not in your souls that love to holiness, that desire after it, that hatred and weariness of sin, that love to the searching, discovering use of the word of God, that love to the brethren, which are the evidences of your title, and to which God hath plainly promised salvation? If then you have your title in the promise, and your evidences in

your hearts, and yet will be still questioning whether you have them or no, and whether the kingdom shall be yours, your weakness and inconsiderateness causeth your own sorrows. And when you have sinfully bred your doubts, will you insist on them to excuse your following sins?

2. Are you not sure that Christ and his benefits are yours? I am sure they are yours, or may be if you will : and nothing but your continued refusal can deprive you of them. For this is the very tenor of the promise. And if you will not have Christ and his offered benefits, why do you so dissemble as to take on you to mourn because you have them not? But if you are willing they are yours.

Object. 'But (you will say) if we had nothing but cause of comfort, we would rejoice : but we have cause of sorrow also. How can we live comfortably under so much sin and suffering?'

Answ. By this account you will never rejoice till you come to heaven ; for you will never be free from sin and suffering till then. Nay, it seems you would have no man else rejoice, and so would banish all comfort from the world. For there is no man without sin and suffering.

But what can there be of any weight to prohibit a sincere belief from seasonable, spiritual rejoicing? Have you sin? It is not gross and reigning sin. And sinful infirmities the best of the saints on earth have had. As your sin must be your moderate sorrow, so the pardon of it, and the degree of mortification which you have attained, and the promise you have full deliverance, should be the matter of your greater joy. Are your graces weak? Be humbled in the sense of that your weakness, but rejoice more that they are sincere and will be perfect. Are your afflictions great? Be humbled under them. But rejoice more that they are but fatherly chastisements, proceeding from love, and tending to your greater good; and that you are saved from the consuming fire, and shall live in everlasting rest, where affliction shall be known no more. Is it possible for that man that hath the love of God, and shall have heaven for ever, to have any suffering that should weigh down these, and be matter to him of greater sorrow than this of joy? Can you imagine that there is more evil in your infirmities and sufferings than there is good in God, and happiness in heaven? Is it reason and equity that you should look at sin only, and not at

grace? and at what you want only, and not at what you have received? Seeing you have more cause of joy than sorrow, should you not distribute your affections proportionable as there is cause? I dissuade you not from seasonable, moderate sorrows. But should not your joy be much greater, as long as the cause of it is much greater?

4. And here I would entreat you to consider well of the tenor of God's commands concerning this matter in the Gospel, and of the examples of the saints there left on record. And then tell me which course it is that God is best pleased with; your cheerful or your dejected course of life! I find that though I pity the sad and miserable, yet I had rather myself have a cheerful than a drooping, grieving, troubled companion and friend. Because I desire one suitable to myself in the state I would be in; and I delight in the welfare, and not in the distress and misery of my friend. And surely God that is love itself, and hath created joy in man to be his happiness, and hath placed so much of misery in sorrow, can never be so delighted in our distress and trouble, as in our content and joy. As he hath sworn that he takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they repent and live; so we may boldly conclude that he takes no pleasure in the anguish and dejectedness of his children, but rather that they walk in love and cheerful obedience before him. But his word will fully and plainly tell you what temper it is that is most pleasing to him. It is a light and easy burden that Christ doth call us to bear; and it is his office to ease us, and give us that labour and are heavy laden with burdens of our own; Matt. xi. 28, 29. He was anointed to preach the Gospel, or glad tidings of salvation to the poor; and sent to "heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty them that are bruised, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord;" Luke iv. 18, 19. When he was to leave the world, how carefully did he provide for the comfort of his disciples! Commanding them not to "let their hearts be troubled" (John xiv. 1.), and promising to send the Comforter to them, and that he would come to them, and not leave them comfortless; ver. 16. 18. 26. Repeating it again, ver. 27, 28. "Peace I leave with you: my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither be afraid." Nay, he engageth

them as they "love him to rejoice, even because he went unto the Father." He engageth them in the dearest love to one another that their lives might be the more comfortable. He foretelleth them of his sufferings and of their own, lest being surprised their sorrow should be the more. He promiseth them that their "sorrow shall be turned into joy" (John xvi. 20.), and that "in him they shall have peace, when in the world they shall have tribulation" (ver. 33.), directing them to prayer, and promising to hear them, that "their joy may be full" (ver. 24.), and promiseth that "none shall take it from them" (ver. 22.), telling them of the "mansions that he prepareth for them," and that it "is his will that they be with him, and behold his glory," that nothing might be wanting to their joy; John xiv. 2, 3. xvii. 23, 24. When he appeareth to them after his resurrection, his salutation is, "Peace be unto you;" chap. xx. 19. 21. 26. The abounding and multiplying of his holy peace, is the desire and salutation of Paul to the churches in all his epistles. Gal. vi. 16. Ephes. vi. 23. Rom. xv. 33. 1 Cor. i. 3. Rom. i. 7. Gal. i. 3. Phil. i. 2. Col. i. 2. 2 Thess. i. 2. 1 Tim. i. 2. Tit. i. 4. Philem. 3. So Peter, 1 Pet. i. 2. ii. 1, 2. 2 John 3. 3 John 14. The Gospel itself is a message of glad tidings; Luke viii. 1. Acts xiii. 32. And it is the work of the ministers of Christ, to preach peace to the sinful world through him (chap. x. 36), and to beseech them to be reconciled to God (2 Cor. v. 19, 20.), and to bring peace to the houses where any of the sons of peace abide; Matt. x. 12, 13. Luke x. 6. Triumphant joys and proclamations of peace were the entrance of Christ's kingdom. Thus angels proclaim, chap. ii. 14. "Glory be to God in the highest: on earth peace: good will towards men." This the new inspired disciples proclaim, chap. xix. 37, 38. "The whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice, and praise God with a loud voice, for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest." What abundance of commands for rejoicing are in the Scripture! "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright;" Psal. xxxi. 1. "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness;" Psal. xcvi. 11, 12. "Rejoice evermore;" 2 Thess. v. 16. "Finally, my brethren, re-

joice in the Lord ;” Phil. iii. 1. “ Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice ;” chap. iv. 4. “ Be careful for nothing : but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God ;” ver. 6. And thus are the godly ordinarily described, even in their deepest sufferings and distress. “ Being justified by faith we have peace with God — and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulation ;” Rom. v. 1, 2. Phil. iii. 3. It is the description of a regenerate man “ to worship God in spirit : to rejoice in Christ Jesus ; to have no confidence in the flesh.” 1 Pet. i. 6, 8. It is the description of believers “ to rejoice greatly in a Christ not seen, even with joy unspeakable and full of glory : though for a season if need be, they may be in heaviness through manifold temptations.” Even in the fiery trial we must rejoice, “ as being partakers of the sufferings of Christ, that when his glory shall be revealed, we may be glad also with exceeding joy ;” 1 Pet. iv. 12, 13. “ When all manner of evil is spoken of us falsely, for the sake of Christ, and when we are hated of all men, and reproached, we must rejoice and be exceeding glad, and leap for joy, as knowing that our reward in heaven is great ;” Luke vi. 22, 23. Matt. v. 11, 12. The apostles were “ as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing : as having nothing, and yet possessing all things ;” 2 Cor. vi. 10. Rejoicing in their suffering for believers (Col. i. 24.), even when they were “ beaten rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ ;” Acts v. 39, 40. The rich must “ rejoice in that he is made low,” as well as the “ brother of low degree in that he is exalted ;” Jas. i. 9, 10. The eunuch, when he was but newly converted “ went on his way rejoicing ;” Acts viii. 39. “ There was great joy in Samaria, when they had received the word of God ;” Acts viii. 8. “ The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous. The statutes of God are the rejoicing of their heart ;” Psal. cix. 111. xix. 8. “ All those that trust in God should rejoice, and shout for joy, and all that love his name should be joyful in him ;” Psal. v. 11. xxxiii. 21. “ Let the righteous be glad : let them rejoice before God, yea, let them exceedingly rejoice ;” Psal. lxviii. 3. “ Let us therefore desire to see the good of his chosen, and rejoice in the gladness of his nation, and glory with his inheritance ;” Psal. cvi. 5. “ Sing unto the Lord : sing psalms unto him :

talk of all his wondrous works. Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord ;” Psal. cv. 1—3. “ The saints shall shout aloud for joy ;” Psal. cxxxii. 9. 16. “ Be glad in the Lord, O ye righteous, and shout for joy all ye that are upright in heart ;” Psal. xxxii. 11. “ Behold my servants shall rejoice : but ye shall be ashamed. Behold my servants shall sing for joy of heart : but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit ;” Isa. lxxv. 13, 14.

Abundance such passages tell you what manner of persons it is that God delighteth in, and what he would have you be and do. These I have recited to shame the godly out of their indecent troubles and dejectedness, as you would shew a child his face in a glass when he crieth, that he may see how he deformeth it. The very “ kingdom of God consisteth in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. If you would live as is most pleasing unto God, and as becometh those that are indeed believers, let the joy of believers be (as far as possible) your ordinary frame. And if by sin you wound your souls, and bring smart upon yourselves, dwell not in that wounded, smarting state ; but go to your Physician, and beg of God that he will “ restore to you the joy of his salvation, and make you to hear the voice of joy and gladness,” that your “ broken heart and bones may rejoice ;” Psal. li. 8. 12.

And take notice throughout all the Scripture, whether you find the servants of God so much complaining of their want of assurance, and of their frequent doubtings of their own sincerity and his love. I think you will find this a very rare thing in the ancient saints. They were sensible of sin as well as we ; and they were as sensible of God’s afflicting hand, and oft (as Job, David, Hezekiah, &c.) complained under it, perhaps with some excess, and too much questioning God’s favour to them, as if he had forsaken them. But (besides and without any such affliction) to live in ordinary trouble of mind through the doubting of their sincerity, and of God’s special love, and to be exercised in the complaining and disconsolate way as now abundance of Christians are, this I find little of in the Scripture saints. The reason was not because they had more holiness and less sin than many that now are thus cast down. For the Gospel time excelleth theirs in degrees of grace ; and I think the greater

care that Christians have of their hearts, and of inward rectitude, and communion with God, and their fuller apprehensions of the life to come, and so of their greatest hopes and dangers, is one great cause. But yet there are worse concurring causes. The love of God, and his readiness to shew mercy, should not be more questioned now, when it is so abundantly revealed by Christ, than it was in times of darker revelation. The servants of God did formerly conceive that nothing but sin could make man miserable; and therefore when they had sinned, they repented; and instead of continuing doubts and fears, they bent their resolutions against their sins; and having cast away their gross and wilful sins, and continuing the conflict against their unavoidable infirmities, which they hated, they knew that the door of mercy was still open to them; and that "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, who is the propitiation." The time that is now spent in doubting and complaining, and asking, How shall I know that I sincerely repent, was then spent in repenting and reforming, and using the means that God hath appointed for conquering of sin; and then trusting to his grace and covenant in the blood of Christ for pardon. And it would be better with us if we did thus. Judge now by all these Scriptures, and by the course of former saints, how God would have you behave yourselves. Do you not read a hundred times of their joy, and thanks, and praising God, and calling upon others to praise him, for once that they perplexedly question their sincerity?

But perhaps you will say, that your strength is so weak, and your sins and enemies so strong, and your duty so imperfect and unworthy, that having such continual cause of trouble, you cannot choose but walk in heaviness, and in fears.

I answer you, (1.) But why do you not tell what you have, as well as what you want? Have you not greater cause to say, My sins being mortified at the root, and all forgiven, and my soul renewed, and reconciled unto God, and I being made an heir of heaven, how can I choose but live in joy?

(2.) Are you heartily willing to forsake your sins, and overcome the things of which you so complain; or are you not? If you are not, why do you complain of them, and will you not consent to let them go, and use God's means to overcome them? If you are willing, then they are but your pardoned

infirmities ; for that is the difference between infirmities and reigning sins. Whatsoever sin consisteth with a great habitual willingness to avoid that and all other sins than to keep them, is but an infirmity ; for it stands with present saving grace, and is always habitually or virtually repented of, and actually, when grace, by knowledge and consideration, hath opportunity and advantage to produce the act.

(3.) And when once you are truly ingrafted into Christ, he is your worthiness, and your righteousness, and the treasury of your souls ; and what you want in your own possession, you have in his hands ; and as what you have is but his gift, so what you want he is able and ready to supply. Look not too much to yourselves, as if your safety and happiness were principally in your own hand. “ God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath life ;” 1 John v. 10, 11. It is through him that we can do all things, so far as he strengtheneth us : and without him we can do nothing. Make use of him therefore as the Lord of life, and joyfully acknowledge all that you receive, and stand not dejectedly lamenting that you need him. If you would have the waters of life, go to the fountain, and do not sit down and fruitlessly vex yourselves with complaining of your wants, instead of seeking for supplies. Is there not an all-sufficient Physician of souls at hand ? Doth he not freely offer you his help ? What though you are not suddenly cured ? Wounds may be caused in an hour, but they use not to be cured in an hour. Stay his time, and use his remedies, and cheerfully trust him, and you shall find the cure successfully go on, though it will not be finished till death.

5. Consider also, that it must needs be the best and most desirable life, which is most like to our life in heaven. And therefore as heaven is a state of joy, so joy is the highest and best condition on earth. He is the best and happiest man, that is most like to the glorified saints and angels. And judge yourselves whether a dejected or a rejoicing Christian be most like to these inhabitants of heaven.

Object. ‘ But (you will say) by that rule we should not mourn at all (for they do not). Whereas God delighteth in the contrite soul, and Christ blesseth mourners and weepers.

Answ. (1.) Your resemblance of the saints in heaven must be proportionable in all the parts. You must labour first to be as like them as you can in holiness, and then in joy. If

you could be as far from sin as they, you need not mourn at all. But because you cannot, you must have moderate, regular sorrows and humiliation, while you have sin. But yet withal you must endeavour to imitate the heavenly joys, according to the measure of your grace received.

(2.) And it is such a regular contrition, consisting in humble thoughts of ourselves, and tending to restore us from our falls and sorrows, unto our integrity and joy, which God delighteth in. And it is such mourners as these, and such as suffer for righteousness' sake from men, that Christ pronounceth blessed. But the inordinate troubles of the soul, that exclude a holy delight in God, though he pardon, yet he never doth encourage.

6. Consider also, that a great part of your religion, yea and the most high and excellent part, doth consist in the causes from, and effects of this holy joy and cheerfulness. (1.) As to the causes of it, they are such as in themselves are requisite to the very being of the new creature. Faith and love, which are the head and heart of sanctifying grace, are the causes of your spiritual joy. And unwilling, heavy, forced obedience, may proceed from mere fears, and this will not prove an upright heart. But when once we believe everlasting glory, and love Christ as our Saviour, and the Father as our Father and felicity, and love a holy frame of heart and life, as the image of God and that which pleaseth him, then our obedience will be cheerful and delightful, unless accidentally we trouble ourselves by our own mistakes. If you can truly make God, and his will and service your delight, you may be sure you love him, and are beloved by him, as being past the state of slavish fear.

(2.) And I have shewed you that joy in the Holy Ghost is itself one part of that grace in which God's kingdom doth consist. Though not such a part as a Christian cannot possibly be without, yet such as is exceeding suitable to his state, and necessary to his more happy being.

(3.) And without this holy delight and joy, you will deny God a principal part of his service. How can you be thankful for the great mercies of your justification, sanctification, adoption, and all the special graces you have received, or for your hopes of heaven itself, as long as you are still doubting whether any of these mercies are yours or not, and almost ready to say that you never received them? Nay, you will

be less thankful for your health, and life, and food, and wealth, and all common mercies, as doubting lest they will prove but aggravations of your sin and misery. And for the great and excellent work of praise which should be your daily sacrifice, but especially the work of each Lord's day, how unfit is a doubting, drooping, distressed soul for the performance of it? You stifle holy love within you, and stop your mouths when they should be speaking and singing the praises of the Lord, and disable yourselves from the most high, and sweet, and acceptable part of all God's service, by your unwarrantable doubts and self vexations. And when all these are laid aside, how poor and lean a service is it, that is left you to perform to him! Even a few tears, and complaints, and prayers! which I know God will mercifully accept, because even in your desires after him there is love; but yet it is far short of the service which you might perform. Nay, your heavenymindedness will be much suppressed, as long as you are sadly questioning whether ever you shall come thither, and it will be yours or not.

7. Are you not ashamed to see the servants of the devil and the world so jocund, and yourselves so sad that serve the Lord? Will you go mourning so inordinately to heaven, when others go so merrily to hell? Will you credit satan and sin so much, as to persuade men by your practice, that sin affordeth more pleasure and content than holiness?

8. You could live merrily yourselves before your conversion, while you served sin; and will you walk so dejectedly now you have repented of it, as if you had changed for the worse, or would make men think so? I know you would not for all the world be what you were before your change. Why then do you live as if you were more miserable than before?

9. You would be loath so long to resist the sanctifying work of the Spirit: and why should you not be loath to resist its comforting work? It is the same Holy Ghost that you resist in both. Nay, you dare not so open your mouths for wickedness, and plead against sanctification itself, as you open them on the behalf of your sinful doubtings, and plead for your immoderate dejections. If you should, how vile would you appear?

10. Lastly consider, that God will lay sufferings enough upon you for your sins, and suffer wicked men to lay enough on you for well-doing, and you need not lay more upon your-

selves. You have need to use all means for strength to bear the burdens that you must undergo: and it is the joy of the Lord, and the hopes of glory, that are your strength. And will you cast away the only supports of your soul, and sink when the day of suffering comes? How will you bear poverty, or reproach, or injuries? How will you meet approaching death, if you feed your doubts of your salvation and of the love of God in Christ, which must corroborate you? O weaken not your souls that are too weak already: weaken not your souls that have so much to do and suffer, and that of so great necessity and importance. While you complain of your weakness, increase it not by unbelieving, uncomfortable complaints. Gratify not the devil and wicked, malicious men so far, as to inflict on yourselves a greater calamity than all their malice and power could inflict. It is a madness in them that will please the devil, to the displeasing of God, though the pleasing of their own flesh be it that moveth them to it. But for a man to please the devil, and displease God, even when he displeaseth his own flesh by it also, and bringeth nothing but sorrow to himself by it, this is in some respects more unreasonable than madness itself. Many cast away their souls for riches, and honours, and carnal accommodations; but who would do it for poverty, sickness, or disgrace? So though many undo their souls for fleshly pleasures and delights, yet he is a strange man indeed that will offend God even for self-tormenting grief and trouble. O therefore, dear Christians, as you have let go all your sensual pleasures for the pleasing of your Lord, do not let go the pleasures of his love, for which you have let go all. "The Lord taketh pleasure in his people, even in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy, and the meek he will beautify with salvation;" Psal. cxlvii. 11. It is meet therefore that his people take pleasure in the Lord; that the "saints be joyful in glory; that they sing aloud upon their beds, and that the high praises of God be in their mouths."

O let not the Spirit of God be thought to be like the evil spirit that vexed Saul, that filled his mind with melancholy, anguish and confusion. It is the evil spirit that renteth and tormenteth those that it possesseth; though the Spirit of God doth humble and by ordinate sorrow prepare for joy: but its proper work is to sanctify, and to comfort, and establish the believer with peace that passeth understanding.

As it is a greater sign of the operation of the Spirit of Christ to restore the lapsed by a spirit of meekness, and to bear one another's burdens, and exercise tenderness, compassion and charity, than to censure and envy, and call for fire from heaven : so even at home (though there we are allowed to be more rigid and censorious) it is a more sure and satisfactory discovery of the Spirit of grace within us, if we are raised to a sweet delight in God, and quieted in his love, and carried out in cheerful obedience, thankfully acknowledging the grace that we have received, and waiting in the use of means for more, than if we are only turmoiled and troubled in our minds, and tossed up and down with unprofitable griefs and fears, that abate our love to God, and our holy joys. It is the still voice that doth most fully acquaint us that it is Christ the Prince of Peace that speaketh to us : though at first when he findeth a sinner in a state of enmity and rebellion, he often useth to thunder and lighten, and call to him as to Saul, " Why persecutest thou me ? " Wilt thou kick against the pricks ? Wilt thou fight against heaven ? Or canst thou bear the wrath of God Almighty ? Yet to the humbled penitent soul, there is none in all the world so tender as Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, the church's husband, that cherisheth them as his own flesh. O that you did but know the greatness and tenderness of his love to you, while you lie trembling under the unjust apprehensions of his wrath ! It would then so transport you with ravishing delights, that the world would see that the saints of the Most High have higher pleasures than the world affordeth.

But I know you will say, ' Alas, what need you exhort us to spiritual pleasures and consolations ? Do you think there is any man in love with sorrows, or unwilling to live in a joyful life ? O that you could tell us how we might attain it ; and you should quickly see that we are willing.'

Ans. And if you are so willing to attain it, as to be also willing to use the means, you shall more quickly see that I shall certainly inform you how you may attain it ; and how you may come to find a life of holiness to be the most sweet and pleasant life. I therefore desire and require you to practise these Directions following.

Direct. 1. Make it your first and principal business to attain the fullest fixed knowledge of God in his attributes, and covenant relations to you.

1. Study him in his attributes. If infinite goodness take not up the soul with love and with delight, it is because it is not known. Where there are all things that the soul of man desires to its highest felicity and content, and yet contentment and delight is wanting, it must needs be ignorance and distance that is the cause. If the sun seem not light to you, it is because you have not eyesight, or look not on the light. If you find no pleasure in the most pleasant food, it is because your appetites are diseased, or you do not taste it. If your most suitable and most affectionate friend seem not amiable to you, it is because you know not his suitability and love. So if the eternal God, that is infinitely powerful, wise and good, most perfect and most suitable to your highest affections, do not possess you with abundant pleasures and delights of love, it is because you are unacquainted with him. Study then, his infinite perfections, and be much with him in secret prayer and meditation, where the retired soul having fewest avocations, is fittest for the most near familiar converse. And still remember that it is Love itself that you have to do with. For God is love. It is the Fountain of all delights and pleasures that you draw near to. It is a cold heart indeed that fire itself cannot warm, and a dead heart indeed that life itself cannot revive. Conceive of God as God, and you will delight in him: abhor all unworthy diminutive thoughts of him: set up his love and goodness in your estimation, as infinitely above all the creatures. Believe it, the love of your dearest friends, is an inconsiderable drop to the ocean of his love. Think not of him as cruel, or an enemy, if you would love him or delight in him. Love and delight are never forced by bare commands and threatenings, but drawn forth magnetically by attractive goodness. Were not God most amiable, and friendly, and desirable to us, it is not saying, Love me, or I will damn thee, that would ever have caused man to love him; but rather to fear, and hate, and fly from him. Think but of God's love, and goodness, and fidelity, as you do of his power, and then you will find that there are rivers of pleasure in his presence, and fulness of joy at his right hand, the foretastes whereof are the only delights that can quiet the troubled thirsty soul.

2. And if you say, 'What is all this to me, any more than to the ungodly world, on whom the wrath of God abideth?'

I answer, thou art in covenant with him, and he is thine in the covenant relations, even thy reconciled Father, thy Saviour, and thy Sanctifier. No husband is so inviolably bound to a wife, nor will so faithfully answer his relation, as the blessed Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier unto thee. Didst thou well know and consider what it is to have God himself to be thine in covenant to all these uses, and to all the ends that thou canst reasonably desire, it would fill up thy soul with satisfying delights.

There is nothing that thou wantest, but what belongs to God to give thee, in one of these three great relations. And sooner shall the day be turned into night, and the frame of nature be dissolved, than God will violate his covenant of grace. "Thus saith the Lord, if you can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be a day and night in their season; then may also my covenant be broken;" &c. Jer. xxxiii. 20, 21. "Fear not, for thou shalt not be ashamed, &c. For thy Maker is thy Husband; the Lord of Hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth shall he be called: for the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God: for a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee nor rebuke thee: for the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee;" Isa. liv. 4, 5, &c. And though yet we have our troublesome imperfections, it belongeth to our God, "through the blood of the everlasting covenant, to make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ, that to him may be the glory for ever;" Heb. xiii. 20, 21. It is his work "to comfort all that mourn; to appoint to them that mourn in Zion, and to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might

be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.— They shall be named the priests of the Lord ; men shall call them the ministers of our God.— Everlasting joy shall be unto them.— For the Lord will direct their work in truth and make an everlasting covenant with them.— All that see them shall acknowledge them that they are the seed whom the Lord hath blessed ; therefore should we greatly rejoice in the Lord ; and our souls should be joyful in our God : for he hath clothed us with the garments of salvation ; he hath covered us with the robes of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels ;” Isa. lxi. “ A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put into you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh, and I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them— and I will save you from all your uncleanness,” &c. Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27. 29. “ And they shall be my people, and I will be their God : and I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them ; and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good ; but I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me : yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good,” &c. Jer. xxxii. 38—41. “ Happy are the people that are in such a case ; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord ;” Psal. cxliv. 15

Nature doth not give you such security that the sun shall shine, and that the streams shall run, that the earth shall be fruitful, as the covenant of the Lord doth give you all that is necessary to your happiness. Study therefore the mercies and riches of the covenant.

Direct. 2. Understand and remember that it is your covenant consent, that it is the condition of your title to all the following blessings of the covenant.

I add this as supposing you will say, ‘ What are all these benefits to me, unless I were sure that I were indeed in the covenant ?’ It is not your merit, but your consent that is required. God offereth himself to be your reconciled Father, and Christ to be your Saviour, and the Holy Spirit to be your Sanctifier. Do you consent to this, or not ? All the ques-

tion is, whether you are willing; and whether your sin be not so sweet to you, that you will rather venture your souls on the wrath of God, than you will be saved from it. If you heartily consent, assuredly you are in the covenant, and the benefits and the joy and comfort are yours. If you do not consent, instead of despairing, presently consent, and refuse not your happiness while you lament your misery.

Object. 'But it is not only covenant-making, but covenant-keeping that must save us: and I have broke my covenant, and therefore have no title to the benefits.' *Answ.* What covenant have you broken? This covenant in question that engageth you to God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost? If thou hast broken this, you have withdrawn your consent: for while you heartily consent, you break it not in any essential part. As it is not every breach of the laws, that makes a man a traitor or rebel, nor every fault or falling out between husband and wife that dissolveth their relation; so is it not every sin, nor any that is consistent with true consent to the terms of the covenant, that is a covenant-breaking forfeiture of the benefits. If you would not have God to be your portion, your Father, your Saviour, and your Sanctifier, you are then covenant-breakers: and if you be so, consent ye, and return to your fidelity, and the comforts of the covenant may yet be yours, for all your former violation.

Direct. 3. Moreover, if you would find the pleasure of a holy life, see that the flesh befooled you not into an over-high estimation of any worldly thing, that so your appetites may not be corrupted with such contrary, unwholesome pleasures, nor your hearts be overwhelmed with worldly cares, or griefs, or troubles. If you will glut yourselves with other kind of pleasures, you cannot expect that holiness should be your pleasure. You cannot find your delight in God, when you turn from him to seek it in the creature. If you sought for less in friends, and health, and prosperity in the world, you might have more in God. How should you find content in God, when you set so light by him, that the promise of beholding him in endless glory will not please you, unless you may also have your fleshly desires, or selfish inclinations pleased here? This is it that perverteth your judgments and affections, and causeth you to injure God and yourselves. You first fancy that it is an excellent thing to be rich and renowned and to rule over others, or to have plenty of all ac-

commodations for your flesh ; and then because God satisfieth not these carnal fancies, you think he neglecteth you, or deals hardly with you ! As if every person in the town should murmur because they are not bailiffs or justices ; when if they had the wit to know it, they are but kept from a double encumbrance, and from a burden which perhaps would break their backs. When the people are thus befooled by the flesh into brutish conceits of the nature of felicity, and into an overvaluing of these worldly things, they are then always either tickled by deluding pleasures, or troubled for the crossing of their carnal wills, so that they grow out of relish and liking with the true and durable delights. Take heed therefore of this carnality.

Direct. 4. Study the greatness of the mercy which you have received. You abound with mercies ; and yet undervalue them and overlook them, and sweeten not your souls with the serious observation and remembrance of them : you study principally your afflictions and your wants ; and thus when you live in a land that floweth with milk and honey, you will not feed on the prepared feast, but keep still the gall and wormwood in your mouths ; and how then should you be acquainted with the pleasures of a holy life ?

Yea, you must use to look more to the spiritual part of all your mercies, and see the love of God that appeareth in them ; and taste the blood of Christ in them, and lose not the kernel ; and take not up with the common carnal part, which every wicked man can value and enjoy. Consider in all your mercies, what there is in them for the benefit of your souls, much rather than how they accommodate your flesh. Could you do thus, you would find the benefit of afflictions ; and that the denial of what you counted necessary mercies, is not the smallest of your mercies. And thus judging truly by the Spirit, and not by the flesh, there is no condition (except that of sin) in which you might not find cause of joy.

Direct. 5. Take heed of sinning : keep still upon your watch against temptation ; sin is the cause of all your sufferings ; when it promiseth you delight, it is preparing for your sorrow ; when it flattereth you into presumption, it is preparing for despair ; when it promiseth you secrecy and security, it prepareth for your shame : and be sure your sin will find you out ; Numb. xxxii. 23. If therefore you have offended, delay not your repentance ; and spare not the flesh

in your return ; but (unless the honour of God forbid it) take shame to yourselves by free confession, and make the fullest reparation of the injury that you can to God and man. If you would thus get out the thorn that vexeth you, the ways of God would be more pleasant.

Direct. 6. Daily live in the exercise of faith, upon the everlasting pleasures : dwell as at the gates of heaven, as men that are waiting every hour when they are called in, and when death will draw aside the veil, and shew them the blessed face of God. And take heed that the enmity of interposing death, prevail not against the joys of faith. But look to Christ that hath conquered it, and will conquer it for you : and if thus you could live as strangers here, and as the citizens of heaven, that are ready to step into the immortal pleasures, you would then taste the pleasures of a holy life, in the firstfruits and foretastes thereof. It is your treasure that must delight you ; as your heart must be there, so your pleasure must be derived thence. Strangers to heaven will be strangers to the believer's joys ; as the pleasure of the carnal world consisteth in the sense of what they have in hand ; so the pleasure of believers consisteth in the fore-apprehensions of what they shall enjoy with God for ever. If therefore you exercise not those apprehensions ; if you look not frequently, seriously and believingly into the world that you must live in for ever, how can the comforts of that world illustrate and refresh you in this present world ? The light and heat, which is the beauty and life of this lower world, proceedeth not from any thing in this world, but from the sun which is so far above us, and sends down hither its quickening influence and rays. They are not the genuine comforts of Christianity, which are not fetched from the world above.

Direct. 7. If you would have the experience of the pleasures of a life of faith and holiness, neither desire or cherish any fears or sorrows, but such as are subservient to faith, and hope, and love, and preparatory to thankfulness and joy. Think not religion consisteth in any other kind of sorrows. Nay, if any other should assault you, be so far from taking them for your duty or religion, as to resist them, and lament them as your sin. That is true and saving humiliation, 1. Which makes you vile in your own eyes, and loathe yourselves for sin. 2. And maketh you more desirous to be delivered and cleansed from your sin, than to live in it, how sweet

or gainful soever it may seem; and 3. Which maketh you set more by a Saviour to deliver you, than by all the pleasures, riches and honours of the world. Whatever want of grief or tears you find, if you have these signs, your repentance and humiliation is sincere. Do not therefore refuse your peace because you have not greater sorrows; nor disturb your souls by struggling for excessive sorrow: take not part with them, but do your best to cast them out, if they are such as would destroy your love and joy, and drive you from Christ, and hinder your thanksgivings. Know that the life of your religion consisteth in the holy love of God and of his image, and servants, and holy ways. Love is your duty, your felicity, and reward: therefore let all tend to the exercise of love, and value most those means which most promote it; and think yourselves best when you abound most in love; and not when you are overwhelmed with those fears and griefs which hinder love. Study therefore above all, the love of God revealed in Christ, which is the best attractive of your love to him; and hateall suggestions which would represent God unlovely and undesirable to you.

Direct. 8. Use cheerful company; not carnal, but holy; not such as waste their time in unprofitable frothy speeches, or filthy, or profane, or scornful jestings: but such as have most of the sense of love and mercy on their hearts; and are best acquainted with a life of faith, and whose speeches and cheerful conversations, do most lively manifest their sense of the love of God, and of the grace of Christ, and the eternal happiness of the saints. There is a delightful and encouraging virtue in the converse of joyful, thankful, heavenly believers: use it therefore if you can have it.

Direct. 9. In your addresses to God in holy worship, be sure that praise and thanksgiving have its due proportion. They are the chief, and most excellent and acceptable part, and therefore let them not have the smallest room. Though your sins and wants be as great as you imagine, it is yet your duty to praise the excellencies, and attributes, and works of your Creator, and to be thankful for the preparations made by Christ, and freely offered you, so that they shall certainly be yours, if you accept them. But much more thankful should you be that have but the evidence of desire and consent to prove your interest in Christ and in his covenant.

I would entreat poor troubled fearful souls to resolve up-

on this one thing, which is reasonable, necessary, and in their power, that when they are upon their knees with God, they will spend as much of their time and words in confessing mercies and praising God, as in confessing sin, and condemning themselves, and lamenting their wants, and weaknesses, and distress. Though they cannot do it cheerfully as they should, let them do it as they can. And at last while they keep in the right way of duty, and use themselves to the commemoration of that which is sweet and grateful to the soul, religion itself will become sweet and grateful ; and cheerfulness of heart will be promoted by our own considerations and expressions. The same I desire of them as to their thoughts ; that they will do their best to spend as many thoughts and as much time upon mercy, as upon sin and misery ; and upon the goodness and love of God in Christ, as upon his threatenings and terrors.

Direct. 10. If you would taste the comforts of a holy life, be sure that you give up yourselves to Christ without reserve, and follow him fully, and place all your hopes and confidence in his promised rewards : serve him with your best, yea, with your all ; and not with some cheap and heartless service. Comforts are the rewards of faithfulness : they that do God the most sincere and costly service, and save nothing from him which he calleth them to lose, are most like to be encouraged by his sweetest comforts. It is sluggish neglects and unfruitfulness, doing no good in the world, but thinking to be saved by a dull profession, that makes so many uncomfortable professors as there be : though I know that on the other extreme, too many live in pining sadness, by not understanding the covenant of grace, which accepteth of sincerity, and secureth the weak and infants in the family of Christ. But yet the barren, unprofitable Christians (I mean that comparatively are such, though they be sincere) shall find that God will not encourage any in slothfulness by his smiles and consolations.

Direct. 11. If you would know the rest and comfort of believers, see that you rest in the will of God in all conditions, as the centre and only bottom for your souls. His will is not to be reduced to yours : strive therefore to bring yours most fully and quietly to his. God's will is the universal original and end of all things ; and there is no felicity or rest for man, but in the fulfilling, and pleasing, and dispo-

sals of his will. Be not too desirous of the fulfilling of your own wills, and murmur not against the disposals of the will of God. It cannot but be good which proceedeth from that will which is the spring of good. The accomplishment of God's will is the perfection of all created beings, being that end for which they are all created. If you rest in your own wills, your rest will be imperfect, disturbed and short of duration; for your wills are the wills of weak and vicious men: they are frequently misguided by an ignorant mind, and perverted by a corrupt and biassed heart: but God's will is never misguided; nor ever determined of any thing but for the best. If you rest here, you rest in safety; you may be sure you shall never be deceived by him. As you pray that his will may be done, acquiesce in the doing of his will; and whatever befall you, repose and satisfy your hearts in this.

Direct. 12. Lastly, let me add, that when you have all the Directions that can be given, you trust not too much to your own understanding and skill for the application of them to yourselves, in any weighty, difficult cases. But as you will not think it enough for the health of your bodies, to have physic books and physic lectures, unless you have also a physician who knoweth more than you, to direct you in the application; so think it not enough that you have the best books and sermons, unless you have also a faithful and judicious pastor, whose advice you may crave in particular difficulties, and who may direct you in the discovery of your own diseases, and applying the fittest remedies in their season and measures, with such rules and cautions as are necessary to the success. If God had not known that there would still be many children and weak ones in his family, that would stand in need of the instruction, support, and encouragement of the strong, he would never have settled pastors in his church to watch over all the flocks, and to be always ready at hand, for the confirmation and encouragement of such as need their help. There had been no physicians, if there had been no diseases. Tire not your physicians with needless consultations for easy and ordinary cases; but be not without them in your greater straits, and wants, and doubts. And "blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trou-

ble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same suffering, which we also suffer; or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation;" 2 Cor. i. 4—6. While you are sick or infants, the stronger must support you. You cannot stand, or go, or suffer of yourselves: and God is so tender of his weak and little ones, that he hath not only given strength to others for their sakes, and commanded the strong to bear the burdens and infirmities of the weak; (Gal. vi. 1, 2. Rom. xv. 1—4.) but also established the ministerial office much for this end. "For the priests' lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts;" Mal. ii. 7. Not that we should disclose our consciences, and depend for guidance on every ignorant or ungodly man, that hath the name and place of a priest. Even among the Papists, men have leave to choose such confessors as are fittest for them. If the priests "depart out of the way, and cause many to stumble at the law, and corrupt the covenant of Levi, the the Lord will make them contemptible and base before all the people, according as they have not kept his ways, but been partial in the law;" Mal. ii. 8, 9. But use those that are qualified and sent by the Spirit of God; who "in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, have had their conversation in the world, especially to youwards;" 2 Cor. i. 12. Such as "you have acknowledged in part, that they are your rejoicing, as you also are theirs in the day of the Lord Jesus;" ver. 14. Not using them as such as have dominion over your faith, but as those that by office, qualification, and willingness and disposition are helpers of your joy; ver. 24.

In the faithful practice of these Directions, you will find that Holiness is the most pleasant way; and that the godly choose the better part; and that the ungodly sensualists do live as BRUTES, while they unreasonably refuse to live as SAINTS.

THE
ONE THING NECESSARY :
OR
CHRIST'S JUSTIFICATION OF MARY'S CHOICE ;
AND
OF HIS SERVANTS' WRONGFULLY ACCUSED.

PREFACE.

IT is not a needless subject which I here offer about needless or less needful things. Little do most men think how much of their wisdom or folly lieth in their right or wrong valuing and using things lawful, and that have an inferior sort of goodness ; and how much their salvation or damnation is herein concerned. Men are condemned for an evil love, but not for the love of evil as evil. Nature is against that. To love a lesser good too much, and a greater too little ; to love the end but as the means, and the means as the end, is an evil love ; ‘ Non malum volumus, sed male.’ It is the act that is evil when the object is good, either in deed, or in the apprehension of the lover. He may will hurt as hurt to another, but it is as conceited to be some good to himself. Apprehension of good or evil, that is, practical judgment, ruleth the wills and actions of the world. Of how great moment then is it to have a truly informed judgment, and to have teachers that will thus truly inform us ! Not about matter of mere talk and dispute, that little concerneth us, but about that which is good or evil to ourselves, and to know indifferent things to be indifferent. It is the pernicious enmity of the fleshly appetite to the soul, that it biasseth the practical judgment and will to take things indifferent to be good and desirable, and almost necessary ; and a small sensible good to be a great one, and a great good, which displeaseth sense and appetite, to be small, if not a hurtful evil.

And indeed the Holy Ghost hath told us (Rom. viii. 5—8.) that this is the difference between the truly godly and ungodly, that one is spiritually minded, and the other carnally ; that is, one savoureth things spiritual, and judgeth of things according to spiritual reason and interest, and loveth and chooseth them for spiritual goodness ; but the carnal have

no such gust, judgment, or love, but value things as the appetite and interest of the flesh inclineth them. Be they both of the same calling, education, and profession, if both were pastors of churches, and preachers of the same doctrine, yet this difference is at the hearts of spiritual and carnal men; and it usually appeareth to others in their lives. If they be public persons, they will shew men what things they value, and what gain it is that they pursue. The flesh loveth not mortification, nor the cross; it is always against spiritual laws and life, and spiritual worship and persons, so far as they cross their carnal interest. He that will worship God, that is a Spirit, in spirit and truth, must have a judgment that most valueth spiritual things, and place his love and hope on spiritual delights and happiness. A carnal mind that savoureth only carnal things, and neither is nor can be subject to God's spiritual law, will hardly relish spiritual worship, or a spiritual kind of life.

One of the greatest signs of a hypocrite is, making a great matter of little (worldly and fleshly) things, and making a little matter of great things. All the things of the flesh and world are things indifferent in themselves, or almost indifferent, further than their relation to spiritual good doth make them become good or evil; good if they further it, and evil if they hinder it. But the hypocrite is never indifferent toward them; he feeleth no great need of spiritual thoughts, spiritual counsel, or discourse, or preaching, or books, or company. Perhaps he can bear them, but he can be without them; and doth neither much desire them, or delight in them. A history, or romance, or merry jest, or game is more pleasant to him. But his thoughts are serious for his carnal commodity, pleasure, and reputation; what he shall eat and drink, and wherewith he shall be clothed. If his house, his maintenance, his meat and drink be not such as the flesh desireth, especially if it be put to straits and sufferings, his sense of it is as quick, and his complaint as serious, as if he were half undone, or it were some great matter at least that he complaineth of. The complaints and tears of many that are in some straits or sufferings should cause wiser tears from serious believers, to see men so miserably carnal, like children that cry for a pin or a feather, as if they had lost their greatest good.

Seriousness is it that sheweth what is next to a man's

heart. It is seriousness and earnestness about fleshly vanity, and want of seriousness about things spiritual and eternal, which is the temperament and character of the hypocrite.

And here I would entreat some that I hope are godly, to forbear so suspicious and disgraceful a course as they are openly guilty of; I mean when they talk so concernedly and eagerly about their meat, and drink, and clothes, and every fleshly thing, as if their hearts were set upon them. Passion and chiding if all be not as their fancies or appetite would have it, doth shew that they are dangerously diseased at least. This meat is not well drest, and the other is too little, or too much; and that sauce is not rightly made, and something or other is still amiss. And all these are talked of as seriously as if the fleshly appetite were the man. In a word, the more serious any man is about great things, the more indifferent he will be about things indifferent. And the more indifferent a man is about the greatest things, the more earnest and serious will he be about things indifferent; and ‘vice versa,’ the more serious he is about things indifferent, the more indifferent he will be about the one thing necessary. Taking great things for small, and small things for great; necessary things for indifferent, and indifferent or smaller things for necessary, is the folly, and the sin, and the damnation of the ungodly. And because all men will do as they are, it is also the corrupter, troubler, and divider, of the Christian societies, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and conversation, and the confounder of the world. Of which faith and serious godliness is the remedy, which valueth and useth all things as they are.

September 29,
1684.

THE
ONE THING NECESSARY ;
OR,
MARY'S CHOICE JUSTIFIED.

LUKE x. 41.

Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful.

HAVING long ago published some sermons on the One Thing Needful, in a Treatise called, “A Saint or a Brute,” I find by more experience than I had then, that it is more necessary to say something on the former part of the text than I thought it was. I then lived among poor, labouring, honest people, who had indeed some temptations from outward wants, but little from wealth and superfluities, nor had leisure to waste time upon so many trifles as I see rich and idle persons think they have.

It is here very considerable, 1. That the Author of this reproof was one who was not to be suspected to mistake through ignorance, or want of love to Martha. And though he lived in a low manner, and not as the rich, yet it was not because he wanted such things that he blameth the minding of unnecessary things, for he was Lord of all; and for our sakes he became poor, yet suffered as rich men, that are supposed to be usually the greatest sinners. “He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death:” Isa. liii. 9.

2. And that his reproof was very serious and compassionate, repeating her name, “Martha, Martha.”

3. The person reproved was not a wicked, fleshly, worldly person; but one that was beloved by him, and a religious believer.

4. The matter which she is reproved for is partly positive expressed (being “careful and troubled about many things”), and partly implied as privative; not preferring the one thing needful at that time so much as she should have done. Which implieth, 1. That the many things were needless, or less needful things. 2. That they took up both her unseasonable time, and the cares of her mind, unto her trouble.

I need no more words to convince you that Christ here teacheth us this lesson, viz.

‘That care and trouble about many needless or less needful things, hindering them from the due minding of the one thing needful, is a sin which Christ reproved in Martha, and therefore blameth in all others who are guilty of it.’

Here, I. Let us consider what Martha’s sin in particular was. II. Whether we are not like to be more guilty of the like. III. In what kind this sin is usually committed. IV. What are the excuses for it. V. What is the evil of it which deserveth such reproof. VI. What use we should make of Christ’s reproof.

I. Martha’s sin (already mentioned) was overmuch care and trouble about her table for Christ’s entertainment, while Mary sat hearing his holy discourse; which shewed that she had less appetite than Mary to the holy doctrine of Christ, that could be more easily without it. 2. And that she overvalued the lower part, his bodily entertainment.

Yet there were these extenuations of it. 1. It was not doing any sinful work in itself.

2. It was not needless in its time and measure.

We are allowed to pray for our daily bread; and here is no mention of any superfluities or excess: and so worthy a guest deserved the best provisions: and it is probable that Martha was the chief housekeeper, to whom it most belonged. And no doubt it was a work of love and honour to Christ. Yet though it was for his own person, and had such excuses, Christ would not take part with it, or forbear to blame it.

And indeed one half of her fault lay in blaming her sister that was wiser, and chose better than herself; and Christ spake this as much to justify Mary, as to blame Martha, as the following words shew.

II. And if we judge but by her quality and case, and ours, we are far liker to be thus culpable than Martha was. For,

1. That country was poor in comparison of ours, and had not half the temptations to many needless things, as we have by our riches and their effects.

2. Christ would not have endured such vanities and excesses as we are usually guilty of.

3. It is like, Martha, that was so familiar with Christ, was less addicted to vanities than we now are.

4. Our common vanities, for which few of the better sort blame themselves, have no such extenuations or excuses as the case of Martha had.

III. But we need no more to convince us, than to name some of the many instances in which our sin is far, yea, very far worse than Martha's.

1. How much of most men's thoughts and time is taken up with the needless cares to grow richer, and be better provided in the world? From one end of the year to the other how great a proportion is thus laid out? Cannot we serve God's providence, and labour in our callings, and do our duty, without such a measure of care and trouble? Into how narrow a compass do worldly cares and troubles cast God's service, and men's cares and thoughts of their endless state in the hearts and houses of most men! These thorns and briars are so rank and plentiful, that they choke much of the seed of the Gospel, and make true godliness and heavenly delight to wither away, and come to little.

2. How many needless cares and troubles have most about God's part and providence, which belongs not to them; fearing what may befall them, lest they should be poor or oppressed, or suffer by others, when they should spend those thoughts in caring for their duty, and trusting the love and faithfulness of God? And no other care will avoid their suffering.

3. How much needless, yea, and brutish thoughts and works have many to please and gratify their appetites? What a base, and yet costly service have they that serve a greedy throat, and a beastly fancy!

Had God taken away many men's health, and appetite, that meat and drink had been loathsome to them, it had been a mercy to many such, who by the pleasure that they have in these, are made slaves to the flesh, and sinks of shameful sin, and the football of temptations, and live under continual

wounds of conscience ; and when the cup is absent, they are sinning in their imaginations and desires, and are contriving how the next meal or day to gratify their appetites again. I speak not of the reeling, befooled drunkard, or the spewing glutton, but of them whose care is for throat and belly, that make a great matter of the pleasing or displeasing of their appetites, and think and talk of it so seriously, as if it were some needful or important thing ; that are displeased in mind if their throats be not pleased, and they fare not sumptuously or deliciously every day. When the poor Israelites had not tasted bread or flesh for many years in a wilderness, nor so much as the Egyptian onions, but only manna, they are killed by God's justice because they murmured ; and when they asked flesh, it is said, " They asked meat for their lusts " (Psal. lxxviii.) ; that is, for their mere appetites, without necessity, for life or health. But how much further do most go now, exceeding even the princes or great men in Israel in the matter and manner of their diet (as I believe the most in England do), and yet never blame or suspect themselves ! Turks can forbear wine at Mahomet's command, and the Rechabites, because their father bid them ; and if the physician forbid strong drink or wine to the sick they can forbear ; but sensual sinners will rebel against God for their desired bait, and their heart and thoughts are set upon it.

4. How much also of many vain people's thoughts and care is spent about needless ornaments of apparel ! Do we need any other proof than the opening of our eyes in the streets, yea, in the holy assemblies, as well as in places of evil fame ? Dives is noted by Christ to wear purple and silk, or as we translate it, fine linen ; and then those that were gorgeously apparelled were in king's houses ; but how few here of the vulgar, yea, of servants, affect it not now that can but procure it ! If the highest do but take it up, inferiors quickly strive to imitate them. In my short time the garb of England is so changed, that but fifty years ago men would have gazed at such as painted Indians, or outlandish strangers, or ugly ruffians, that had gone as most civil and religious people do in this city now. Paul would have forborne wine and flesh while he had lived, rather than this liberty should hurt his weak brother's soul. But if the scandal of our pride and gaudery do make many weak persons turn

Quakers to fly from it, how few for to avoid this would avoid the most gaudy, and effeminate, or ruffianly fashion of clothes or hair? And instead of receiving reproof from such Quakers, they are hardened the more because of the weakness of their reprovers. I am loath to name those gauds with which especially the female sex do openly shew their vanity, which tell all beholders what needless trifles take up much of their time, and cost, and care. And alas, for men's stupid folly all this is, while thousands want food and raiment, while whole countries are impoverished by cruel wars, when dreadful flames have consumed our wealth, and rebuked our pride, and humbling diseases have shewed us what flesh is; and when our daily feeling tells us it is perishing; and while we are going to a loathsome grave, and see the dust and bones of those whom we are following; and the plain warnings of Peter, 1 Pet. iii. 3—6. and many such stand in the Bible as ciphers to them.

5. How many needless things take up the rich, about their houses, furniture, retinue, and entertainments? Especially those that are most proud, and most curious and vain. Conveniency must be a pretence for sinful cost and labour; handsomeness or decency must be a pretence for needless charge in furniture, while the poor go almost naked. Cleanliness must be a pretence for their servants spending much of the day and year in needless vanities, which might be much better spent. Not to be accounted careless or uncleanly by others of the like vanity seems to be excuse enough for a multitude of needless curiosities. To find poor people work, doth pass for an excuse for employing servants and tradesmen in making and providing all these need-nots, as if they might not have been better employed for the common good, and encouraged to learn some better trades; as if they knew not how narrow a coffin, and little furniture must shortly serve them. The report of good housekeeping and entertainments must justify the excesses, and chargeable, needless superfluities of the rich.

6. What needless cares and business have many to avoid the contempt or hard thoughts of others! How near goeth it to a proud heart what is thought and spoken of them! And their avoiding of contempt must be the reason of most of the forementioned vanities, in their dress their houses,

their retinue, and the rest ; when alas, they have another kind of judgment to prepare for, and they, and those whose thoughts they so much regard, are almost dead and dust already.

7. What a deal of some men's care and thoughts are spent in needless contrivances for power and greatness in the world ! What works find some Ahithophels and Hamans for their minds ! As if it were needful for a man to fall at last from a higher place than the rest about him ; or to have his will fulfilled by all others ; or to have the souls or lives of many to answer for ; or to be more strongly allured to the damning love of this world than other men ; or to be envied by many ; or to be a ruler of others, before one knoweth how to be obedient to God, and to rule himself. And O what worse than needless troubles, even horrible wickedness, doth this ambition lead many to ! Even to be the plagues of the earth, and incarnate devils, by bloody wars, and cruel oppressions, desolations, and persecutions.

8. Yea, some of lower rank have such imperious idol wills that nothing must cross them, or be said or done by any about them, but as they would have it. And yet it is two to one but so many persons and things will cross them, and go quite contrary to their wills, as that their disease will be their continual torment. And they will be like one in winter that cannot bear the cold, and yet must bear it ; or like a poor man that is a servant to his appetite, and hath not wherewith to please it ; or like one that dwelleth by the sea, and cannot bear the sight of the water ; or in a wood, and cannot bear the shaking of a leaf. Such worse than needless troubles doth an idol will produce.

9. And how much time is lost in vain and needless talk about things not justly pleasing, and no way profiting ourselves and others ! A vain tongue being the index of a vain mind, as if mind and tongue had no higher or better subjects or employment.

10. And in this city it is not a little time that is taken up with needless sports and recreations. I will not honour the gamester's trade with so soft a name as needless work ; nor the playhouses, nor the houses of excess and lust. But if cards, dice, and stage-plays had never been branded and condemned by the ancient canons of the Christian churches,

and did not notoriously bear the marks of temptation, and much gross folly and sin, yet vanity and needlessness should be enough to make men that believe in another world, and the shortness of this life, to abhor them, and better spend their time. There is a sort of pleasure and recreation that is needful. That which fits us best for our necessary works and duties, preserving by motion the health of the body, or refreshing the weary spirits of hard students. But God hath left no man in such a penury of recreation but that he may find more useful, profitable, manly, time-saving, and safe ones, than gaming or stage-plays, or romances, and such ensnaring, befooling, unprofitable time-wasters are.

11. And among all the needless, deceitful vanities, unprofitable studies and arts are not the least. When Cornelius Agrippa had strained his brain to such curiosities that he passed for a conjurer, and had written a commentary upon Lullius' arts after many others; he concludeth all with an honest and Christian-like treatise, 'De Vanitate Scientiarum,' commending the study and practice of God's word as the only true wisdom. And though I have marvelled at the Carthage council, which forbade the reading of heathens' books, I never wondered that men's excess herein should be rebuked, nor that Paul called men to beware lest they were deceived by vain philosophy, and to avoid opposition of sciences falsely so called. Languages, logic, metaphysics, physics, mathematics, &c. have their use; but he is a learned man indeed who rightly applieth them to that use, and separateth the needful from the needless part, the certain from the uncertain, truth from falsehood, and presumptuous conceits; the plausibleness of the thing inviteth many to waste their time in unprofitable studies, who durst not have spent it in playhouses and gaming; and yet I doubt to many it will prove no better.

Query. But the doubt is, 'What are these needless, sinful things, that seemeth needless to one that is not so indeed, or to another? Cynics call decencies, and ornaments, and conveniences, and pleasure needless.'

Ans. 1. That is needless which doth no good.

2. Those things that do more hurt than good.

3. Those things which answer not the cost and labour which is bestowed upon them.

4. Those things that are good, but hinder and deprive us

of a greater good, which we may well spare, but are hindrances to the one thing necessary, which we cannot spare ; all these are certainly needless, if not worse.

But because vain persons are hardly convinced, till God by light or fire do convince them, I will help them by these few questions following.

Quest. 1. Is that act which you plead for a thing which God doth any way command you directly or indirectly? If not, how can it be needful to you? You will say, Are there not some things indifferent and lawful which are no duties?

Ans. 1. There are natural things which are not moral (either virtue or vice); as your health or sickness, and such things as are God's works, and not yours; of these I speak not. 2. There are actions of your own which are merely natural, neither commanded nor forbidden, and that is all those which are no matter for rational choosing or refusing, such as have no moral use; as winking with the eye, which foot I shall first put forward; which of two equal things, in meat, drink, and apparel, &c., I shall take (not choose), when it is needful that I do one, but it is perfectly indifferent which. But the things which I am speaking of are of no such nature, but such as belong to rational choice, and are accordingly chosen by you.

Quest. 2. Would your consciences trouble you for it as any sin, if you omitted the thing which I call needless? I suppose not.

Quest. 3. Is it to please God as an act of obedience that you do them? Is your curiosity, and your vain attire, and the rest forementioned chosen to please God, or to please your fleshly sense and fancy, or the world?

Quest. 4. Will it be any hurt to you, or real loss, if they be omitted, or be denied you?

Quest. 5. Have you got any thing by them already, or not lost more than you have gotten?

Quest. 6. Are they things that the better or the worse sort of persons more mind and plead for? Whose delights are cards, and dice, and plays, and vain fashions? Is it the most heavenly, or the most fleshly persons that are most eager of them, and most use them?

Quest. 7. Do you find that they more help or hinder you in prayer and other holy exercises? Especially your heavenly delights?

Quest. 8. How do they relish with you when you think of death and judgment? Are they a comfortable part of your preparation? Had you rather then review and answer for your time spent in these, than in greater things?

If you will but set conscience to answer these questions, methinks you should soon perceive yourselves what things they be that are needless, and therefore not to be chosen, and consequently unlawful.

But that you may see that I drive you not to any extremes, I shall negatively add,

1. I do not number all our thoughts, care, and labour for our bodies, children, or others, about things needful and convenient, to be these needless things.

2. Nor is our diligent labour in a constant calling needless; he that will not labour, St. Paul saith, should not eat; this is a part of our obedience to God, "Six days shalt thou labour."

3. Nor is it needless to labour for more than we need ourselves, that we may have to give to him that needeth, and to do good to others.

4. Nor is it needless to do our best for our bodily health to fit our bodies to be able and cheerful servants to our souls. That food, that recreation and pleasure, which is necessary to fit body or mind for service, and the work of a Christian life, is not vain.

5. All men are not called to the same kind of labour and employment. That is needful to one, which is not to another.

6. The lowest things which we do in obedience to God, if it were but sweeping the streets or chimnies, is not to be numbered with the needless things, but rather a comfortable exercise of humility and obedience.

But every man must prefer the greatest thing.

IV. What are the common excuses of this sin?

Object. 1. 'Some say, that it is but few persons, at least not all, that are fitted for, and called to great employments. They that cannot do greater matters must do lesser.

Ans. All are not called to govern kingdoms, nor to be teachers and pastors of the church; but all have some talent, which they must use and answer for; and all may do somewhat which tendeth to the common good; the servant of labour that plougheth, soweth, and reapeth doth serve the

commonwealth; and if his master live idly, and spend his time in gaming, plays, or other vanity, can he excuse it by claiming a greater incapacity than his servant had? A mason, a carpenter, a tailor, a chimney-sweep, do that which is needful to be done; and shall rich men live idly, and do no good, because they are rich?

Object. 2. 'I was not bred up to labour; they that were bred up to it must use it.'

Ans. If you were not bred up to some calling or employment, profitable to yourself and others, you were bred in sin, and then it were time to break it off. Idleness, with pride, and fulness, are noted to have been Sodom's sins; and will you not amend because you were bred in sin? Can you bear the doom of the unprofitable, slothful servant? Matt. xxv. Or will it excuse you because you have been slothful from your youth?

Object. 3. 'God doth not require toil and labour from those that are rich, and need it not.'

Ans. God doth not require the same kind of labour from all; but if he give you more than the poor, he requireth not less, but more from you; that is, your constant diligence in more profitable work; else you may as well say, That God is the Governor of none but the poor; or that he looketh for least service where he giveth most wages.

Your labour is not only to supply your own needs, but to profit others, and for the common good.

And the more you do in way of duty, the more you receive and profit yourselves. Idleness is your own loss to soul and body.

Object. 4. 'Men need recreation and relaxation.'

Ans. What do you need it for? Is it not for your work, and your health, to enable you to work? Use no more than furthereth your health and work, and that shall not be called needless.

Object. 5. 'Little things are useful in their places: Christ saith of some such, "Those ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."'

Ans. No doubt but there are things good and needful of several degrees; all are not of the most needful kind. But what is this to that which is not needful? Or that hindereth more needful things, as afore-described?

Object. 6. 'Old men are incompetent judges of the case

of youth, as not having their inclinations to sports and pleasures ; and all men, especially divines and lawyers, and such like grave men, who are themselves taken up with greater matters, are incompetent judges of the affairs of women, their clothes, their furniture, their expenses, and their employments, and are apt to call all needless which is below their work.

Ans. Yet Christ thought himself meet to judge of the choice of Martha and Mary, and Solomon to give directions to women, and so did St. Peter and St. Paul. Old men were once young, and know what youthful inclinations are ; and grave men that live among women, see their business, and know their reasons. And if all sorts of persons shall judge ministers, lawyers, and judges incompetent to judge of their tradings, actions, and affairs, and so appropriate the judgment of them to themselves alone, then all persons will by their own judgments be always in the right, and none will be capable of amendment ; the proverb is, ‘ A stander-by may see more than a player ;’ but it is confessed that a just judge must hear and consider the whole case.

Object. 7. ‘ We shall be derided if we are singular.’

Ans. Will God deride you for obeying him ? Hath not he said, “ Be not conformed to this world ?” You will be derided and persecuted too by wicked men, if you will be true to Christ, to godliness, sobriety, and honesty ; and is that a good reason why you should be sensual, worldly, and ungodly ?

V. But what is the sin here reprov'd, &c. ? What harm is it to be thus careful and troubled about many things that are not comparatively needful ?

Ans. 1. To prefer little things before greater, and thus to employ ourselves, is a wilful debasing of our souls, which should be exercised about that which is answerable to the dignity of their natures ; as it is a debasing of a prince to use him as beggars, or in sordid work ; and as it were below a wise man to talk at the rate of fools and children ; so is it a debasing of a soul that is made for things of endless consequence to employ it upon needless trifles. Pride maketh men think well of themselves, and look high in the world, and disdain to be set low in men’s thoughts, words, or em-

ployments; and yet when God commandeth them to look higher, they choose a low and sordid life.

2. It is a wilful contempt of the most excellent things: God and our Redeemer, grace and glory, are before us, and should be remembered and sought in the first place; and it is a contempt of them needlessly to turn from them our minds and time to vanity. The mind of man is not infinite, but narrow, and cannot be employed on many things at once; if it be taken up with trifles, it cannot choose but neglect greater things. And for God, and Christ, and heaven, to be set by, while we play with toys, is profane contempt.

Object. 'We cannot be always thinking of God and heaven.'

Ans. But you must always be serving God in one kind or other, and always doing that which tends to heaven; as you are not all day meditating of the light, but you are all day using it.

3. This taking up our minds and time with needless things, is a great injury to ourselves by neglect of our own greatest benefit and necessities. Did but men know what they have to mind and seek, it would be their speedy cure. Alas! we are all behindhand in our great and necessary business; and these triflers usually are more behindhand than others. They have more to do of unspeakable consequence than all their time and diligence will serve for, as it deserveth, (having lost so much already,) and yet have they so much to spare for trifles.

O that these loiterers knew their necessity and their work! 1. You have a God to know, of whom you are too ignorant; you have his word and will to know, which you are yet much unacquainted with. 2. Do you know what it is to get, keep, use, and strengthen a lively belief of the word of God, and the unseen world? 3. Do you know what it is to get assurance that God is your reconciled Father, that Christ and salvation are yours; that you are truly sanctified, and shall live in heaven for ever? 4. Do you know what it is to get the heart in love with God, and to long after communion with him in glory? 5. Do you know what it is to get down all the lusts of the flesh, and watch against all the snares of sense and vain imagination, and to escape the love of these alluring pleasures, and the danger of particu-

lar sins of sensuality? 6. Do you know what it is to subdue all your carnal affections and passions, and to get in their stead a zeal for God, and to be fervent in his service? 7. Do you know what it is to get above the love of riches, and to escape all the snares of covetous desires? 8. Do you know what it is to keep a holy government of your thoughts, and to employ them in their proper work? 9. Do you know what it is to rule your tongues, in forbearing evil, and using them for that which they are made for? 10. And do you know what the spiritual, sincere, and constant use of all God's worship is, word, prayer, sacraments, &c. 11. Do you know what it is to renew repentance for our renewed sins? 12. And to keep down all pride, and to walk humbly before God and man? 13. Do you know what it is to love others as yourselves; to do as much good to all men's souls and bodies as you can? 14. And what it is to discharge all the duties of your several relations, to all your superiors, inferiors, and equals? 15. And what it is to find out the corruptions and deceitfulness of your own hearts, and well to understand yourselves? 16. And what it is to understand the nature and danger of all satan's temptations, and to escape or overcome them? 17. And what it is to obey all the motions of God's Spirit? 18. And to use all our daily mercies well? 19. And to bear afflictions patiently, and profitably? 20. And to be above the love of this body and life, and ready to die? 21. And to live in the joy and comfort which beseemeth the children of God, the members of Christ that wait in hope of endless glory? Do but understand what all, or half this is, and conscionably do it, and then spend the rest of your time in cards, dice, plays, vain adornings, curiosities, and other trifles.

4. Consider also that time and life are very short, and very uncertain, and therefore not to be spent on needless things by one that standeth at the door of eternity.

5. The experience of other men should move us: all right repenting men, and most dying men, wish that their time had not been so wasted, but spent on that which was necessary to the great ends of life.

6. Conscience telleth most that have not seared it, that at death and judgment we are like to wish that needful things had taken up all our time.

7. It is a wrong to our great Creator and Preserver, that

we should thus waste our time while he maintaineth us, as if he gave us life and mercy for such vanity.

8. The example of Christ and his saints is a reproof of all such vanity; we find not that they thus spent their thoughts and time.

VI. The uses we should make of this are these.

1. Parents may hence learn for what employment they should educate their children in the world, what they should teach them, and to what trades and callings they should set them; not to such as will spend their lives in vanities; but such in which they may be most useful to themselves and others in the world. Not that all can be of the best or highest callings, but all should be educated for the most use and service, and all employed in the best which they are fit for. It is a debasing of your children to intend them for no better than to live at ease to get money; a heathen would tell you, that usefulness to the commonwealth is more to be regarded; and a Christian knoweth that the serving of God in the greatest profiting of ourselves and others, must be preferred.

II. Let us all review our lives, and see here how much we have to repent of; and let us see also what cause of lamentation we have for the common guilt of all sorts, against these and such like words of Christ.

But to prevent your misunderstanding of me, I first profess that I intend not to make you cynics, or superstitious, nor to persuade you that it is necessary to your salvation to live nastily and indecently; nor that it is any part of your holiness or perfection to be singularly sordid, and to avoid things comely and convenient, as some old hermits and anchorites, and divers Popish saints seemed to think. I am not drawing you to imitate that present sect among us, that set up at first with a holiness which consisted much in forbearing cuffs, and bands, and hatbands, and ribands, and saying thou instead of you, and withal in open reviling the most faithful ministers. It is not a superstitious "touch not, taste not, handle not;" (Col. ii. 20, 21.) I am commending to you; but I fear lest the contrary common extreme be much more dangerous. I would not speak against your smallest convenience, so far as it become not a time-wasting snare, and hindered not your heads, hearts, and lives from greater necessary things. I know that when St. Paul speak-

eth often for providing things honest, and living honestly, he meaneth things decent, and of good report; to expose one's self purposely to be laughed at, as St. Francis, and such others are said to have done, is no just exercise of piety or humility.

But alas what a doleful spectacle is it, to one that believeth whither we are going to see what it is that most men are doing, and what it is that they leave undone! I am not now speaking of the time that is spent in direct evil; but little do men know how dangerously they sin in spending too much in things that have some good, and in preferring conveniences, and small bodily pleasures and commodities, before the great and needful things; who can doubt but it was a decent and good thing for Martha to make provision for Christ, and to attend and serve him? Are not most of your unseasonable cares and troubles about much smaller matters than this? But at the time when greater things should be done, even these are culpable cares and troubles; much more those many little trifles, which only pride and folly calleth needful. And verily we have all so much of this necessary work to do, that leaveth us little room or time to spare for things which most men spend much of their lives in; so great and urgent are our main concerns, as should make every wise man study diligently to put by as many of the less diverting matters as he can. He that had money to lay out for his ransom, or for his life, or necessary livelihood, would spend little on small matters, till he were sure he had enough to spare. Harken but wisely to God and conscience; foresee whither you are going, and what you have to do, and of what inconceivable importance, and then consider whether you have room and time for all or any of those diverting trifles which are the chiefest care and business of the unbelieving carnal world.

This needless business plainly sheweth that you have low and little souls. As children playing in the sand shew their difference from men that apply themselves to manly business, so your over-business about your ornaments, dresses, compliments, rooms, and many such trifles, doth tell others (whether you will know it yourselves or not,) that you have both childish understandings, (and worse, because you are at age,) that set too much by little things; and that you have too much carnality of affection, when you have so

much mind of trifling neednots. And worst of all, it plainly sheweth that you greatly want a sounder belief and deeper sense of your great business and interest in the world, and live not in the sense of the nearness of death, and things eternal, as wise believers should still do.

I am not saying that you should always have the sinful fears and sadness, which the sentence of death doth bring on most; I had rather you were quite above these to the last. Nor do I say you should always have just the same kind of passions, or do all things just in the same manner, as you ought to have and do if you were sure to die to-morrow. But I must say, that you should have the same wisdom, and the same esteem of God, and of the world, of soul and body, of heaven and earth, of eternity and time, of duty and sin, of necessities and trifles, as you will then have; and the same holy affections, and diligence, and practice of life, which this wisdom will then teach you to wish that you had sooner had. O let there not be too great and shameful a difference between your living and your dying thoughts. If your father, or child, or husband, or wife, were on their deathbed, or going to execution, would not all be ashamed of you, that should hear you talk to them about cards, or plays, or fine clothes, or laces, or greater worldly toys than these? Yea, if you were taken up yourselves about your own ornaments, dressings, curiosities, and troublesome triflings, who would not say that you were disgracefully senseless of your own and your dying friend's condition? O promise not yourselves more time than God hath promised you! Dream not that you dwell further from the grave than you do: you know not what it is to live as Christians, or as men, if you know not that all our life should be spent in our best preparation for death. Though you must do much which you would not be just found doing, you must do nothing but what you can then comfortably review, nor spend a moment in that which then you must wish that you had not spent it in. And whether time-wasting trifles and neednots will be comfortably remembered then, by one that hath reason and faith, and had so little time, and so much to do with it, methinks it might be easy to foresee.

Verily if you spent your time in no greater matters, than in getting gold and worldly glory, crowns, and kingdoms, merely for your flesh, and the greatest pleasures of a carnal,

transitory life, you will in the everlasting review be confounded and tormented in remembering your self-abasing folly. And are your many little trifles then of more worth to make you a just excuse? Gentlemen, ladies, and gentlewomen, do not only bear with me, but be willing and thankful that I deal plainly with you, when it is not for me, but for yourselves : it is such as you that are most ordinarily and inexcusably guilty of this sin and folly. The poor labouring countryman and tradesman indeed is inexcusable that will be diverted from the care of his everlasting state, even by his most lawful and necessary labours : but usually their guilt is less far than yours in all these following respects.

1. That which they do is profitable to the commonwealth, and so is good, and part of their duty in itself considered. To plough, and sow, and reap, and make you bread, and drink, and clothes, &c. But what good cometh to the commonwealth by your curiosities, and vanities, and plays, and compliments, though decency, and cleanliness, and handsomeness, and avoiding contempt and reproach be vainly pretended for them. They gather, and you waste. They are the bees, and you are the drones. They labour, and you consume it on your lusts and fancies. God bid them labour six days, but he never bade you make such a stir for mere unnecessary vanities.

2. Necessity is some reason for what they do, though it be no good excuse for leaving undone greater things. They must maintain themselves and families, and pay you your rents. But what necessity have you to waste thoughts and times about your many unprofitable toys? Martha had some excuse, but you have none.

3. God giveth you more wages, and therefore doth expect more work ; you are stewards of more trust, and therefore have more to give up an account of.

4. They can say, Christ and his apostles, and all good men, have laboured and done such things as we do ; and it is part of his law, that if we will not work we shall not eat ; and Solomon's mother, a queen, and he the wisest king by her teaching, describeth the virtuous woman to be one that worketh willingly with her hands on wool and flax, that riseth before day to look to her household, and her candle goeth not out by night ; and eateth not the bread of idle-

ness; (when too many of the rich do eat no other.) The labours of your tenants have such precedents as these. But have you any such for your needless formalities and toys? Did Christ or his apostles spend their time in prating of unprofitable things, or in idleness, or plays, or gaming, or in childish neatifying their bodies, or such like? Was St. Peter of your mind when he wrote to Christian women, that “their adorning be not outward, of plaiting the hair, and of wearing gold, or of putting on of apparel, but the hidden man of the heart; in that which is not corruptible, even of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in God’s sight of great price?” 1 Pet. iii. 3. That is, regard that which is precious, and adorneth you in the sight of God, and affect not neatness or costliness, to make you seem either rich or comely in the sight of man, but clothe your corruptible flesh with cheap and easy plainness, as beseemeth those that are going to the grave. It is not apparel, but ornaments, that he forbids, and a vain desire by our apparel to seem somewhat higher or handsomer than we are to men.

Perhaps you will say, that Christ and his apostles were poor men, and therefore neither patterns nor fit judges for you. *Answ.* But yet they shall judge you, whether you will or not; and they who tell men by their lives, that they take not their doctrine or example for their rule, or Christ for their governor, shall find that unbelief and rebellion are not the way to their justification. But though they that are gorgeously clothed then dwelt in king’s houses, do you but read the thirty-first chapter of the Proverbs, and take there the counsel and pattern of a queen and king, and I will reprove you no more.

And you that are so regardful of the thoughts and eyes of men, and whose pride maketh so great a matter of your reputation, that all about you be sightly, and liable to no contempt, why do you not most regard your reputation with the wisest and the best? St. Peter before told you what are the precious ornaments in the sight of God: and wise men and good men come nearest to God in all their estimations. Who will bestow much cost or time, or hire servants, or trim themselves, or their houses, for children or bedlams to look on and admire? None but such as yourselves do think ever the better of you for all your costly or troublesome curiosi-

ties : wise men look at you as at players, or morice-dancers, some with laughter, and all with pity ; and think what empty souls are these that mind such little childish things.

And seeing common reason tells you, that a man's dignity or baseness lieth in the dignity or baseness of the things which he mindeth, hopeth for, and seeketh, and of the work in which his life is spent, why will you set yourselves so far below your poor tenants and labouring servants, as to choose employments, so far baser than theirs ? That is basest which is most vain, and of little benefit to yourselves or others. Your ploughman, your baker, your brewer, your cook, yea, your chimney-sweeper, live upon more useful employments, than some rich, vain, curious, idle persons.

And as all sin blindeth and befooleth sinners, it is two to one but these self-abasing persons will distaste what I say, as thinking that it is against them ; when common reason might tell them that all this that I speak is for them, even for their honour, their commodity, their conscience, and their salvation. Should I persuade one that selleth pins and points, or the scavengers that carry out dust and dung, to become merchants that trade for gold and enriching merchandise, few of them would be so sottish, as to think I speak against them, to their dishonour or their loss.

And still I confess that many little things are needful in their place and season. We should miss pins and points if we were without them. Dirt and uncleanness must be swept and washed away. Garments should be warm and comely. Rooms that are convenient are desirable. Comely and stately buildings and furniture for princes and rulers are a due ornament to magistracy, and splendid cities and temples are an honest imitation of the great and glorious works of God. Sweet harmony and melody exhilarate the spirits for and in God's holy praise. All his mercies should be used to fit us to serve him with gladness and joyfulness of heart. It is not a cynical life that I plead for, but a base and childish life that I am dispraising. When comeliness, and decency, and cleanliness, and reputation is made a pretence for such trifling away your own and your servants' time, and setting up such toyish trades and employments, as nothing but your own sinful disease and folly could keep you from being ashamed of, and your consciences from accusing

you for. I am ashamed to name over the trifles within doors and without which I mean.

But satan is subtle as well as malicious, and knoweth that all fish bite not at the same bait. Crowns and enlarged dominions are the diversion of some who think their designs are high and honourable, while they go to damnation with more applause than worldly peasants. Brave speculations and pleasing knowledge of things unnecessary, are the bait of others, that scorn to neglect God, and cast away their salvation for such low and little things as the wanton, and the glutton or drunkard do. Yet these that are pleased in satisfying their appetites, think that they make a wiser bargain, and have somewhat more instead of heaven than sick-brained childish women, that have no better in exchange than things and businesses which I am ashamed to name.

O that God would awaken all our reason by a lively faith, to see where we stand, and what is before us, and with whom we have to do, and how little transitory things of the flesh do signify to a sound understanding! We should then see that time and life are of greater use than to be played and fooled away. Every moment of it would then appear to be very precious, and of great use. Whereas that is vile which is good for nothing but vile employments. That hour which is useful for no greater work than your trifling neednots, is of no greater worth than the work which it is for. Had you no more to do with it, how undesirable were life! Surely the gain or pleasure of an idle or a trifling life will never compensate the cares, and troubles, and sufferings which we must all undergo. Were a prince, judge, or doctor, set up as a picture only to adorn a room, or as a mawkin to frighten away crows from the corn or garden, this were not useless, yea, it were better than many of your time-wasting vanities: but sure it would be a great debasing of such persons, as scarce worth the cost and trouble of living.

The Scripture tells us indeed, that man walketh in a vain show, and that "verily every man at his best estate is vanity;" yea, all under the sun is "vanity and vexation of spirit." But all this is said only of man as seeking a felicity in this world, and of all that he is and doth, with no higher respect than to the present prosperity and pleasure of the flesh. But there are greater things offered us which are not

vanity, even the pleasing of God, and the fruition of his love and glory for ever; and were our life and time devoted to these high and noble ends, were our waking and sleeping, our eating and drinking, our health and sickness, our labours, yea, and our needful recreations, employed for these, and measured accordingly as means hereto, they would be holy and comfortable, and the lowest things would be thus honoured and precious. They that are “stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord,” do find their “labour not in vain;” 1 Cor. xv. 58. The same house, goods, money, food, raiment, time, as used by holy believers, and by carnal worldlings, &c. differ more than we can now conceive. HOLINESS TO THE LORD is the name of the one, and VANITY, VEXATION, and SIN of the other.

But alas, man who as a shadow passeth away, doth set his heart on transitory shadows, and dreaming, and seeming, and stage-employments, and enjoyments, make up his hypocritical life and comforts. His religion is naturally (till grace amend him) but show and ceremony; his heartwork, and house-work, and public-work, is little but shadow and ceremony. Time is spent, and money spent, and talk spent, and thoughts spent, upon shadow and ceremony. Servants are employed too often also in wasting their time to serve their master’s fancies in mere shadow and ceremony. You can see and hear but little that is better, or of greater use in many rich persons’ daily conversations, in their retinue, in their splendid houses, and curious adorned rooms, or any thing even of that which commandeth their hearts and time, and in which they place their dignity and pleasure; until either grace happily, or death miserably, awake their wit, and then they cry out, ‘All is vanity and vexation; O that we had better spent our time!’ “This their way is their folly, and yet their posterity approve their sayings;” Psal. xlix. 11—13. And still others rise up that tread in their unhallowed steps; and satan’s kingdom can truly boast of an uninterrupted succession, even from the days of Cain until now.

I shall end with some directions how to judge, 1. Of needless things. 2. And an answer to some cases of conscience.

I. 1. All things are culpably needless which answer not

the cost, and labour, and time, which is laid out upon them. You may judge by the good which they are like to do.

2. Those things are culpably needless which are but to serve a desire or humour, which we have no need to please. If the lust or fancy be vain, the means that serve it can be no better ; whether it be the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or pride of life, which are not of the Father, but of the world. Men say, We delight in this or that, in curiosity, in costly or time-wasting sports, or such as profit not their bodily health, in gawdy dresses, or such like ; and why may we not gratify our delight ? Why, it is supposed to be a needless, unprofitable delight, proceeding from a vain fancy, which should rather be cured than pleased.

3. All things are much more culpably needless which proceed from a vicious, sinful humour, desire, or lust ; make no provision for the flesh, to satisfy the lust therefore :” Rom. xiii. 13, 14. To mind the things of the flesh is enmity to God, and to the minding of spiritual things ; Rom. viii. 6. 7. Unnecessary, sensual delights corrupt the soul, and strongly turn down the mind from God and holy pleasures ; and the mortifying of such fleshly lusts or pleasures is no small part of our religion.

4. All those are culpably needless and worse which are preferred before truly needful things ; and which are against them, and shut them out, or take up that same time and room which they should have ; if you have any thing of greater moment, which should be done at that same time, whatever hindereth it is vanity, and worse ; and therefore there is no cure for vanity of mind and life, till men come to know their great necessities, and important business, which they have for all their thoughts and time, even the regard of their end and all the means, the duties of their spiritual and temporal callings, and see that they have no time to spare.

II. *Quest.* ‘ Is it lawful to be of a trade which serveth the humours of vain persons, as to make cards, or dice, or stage-plays ; or vain attire, as ribbons, perriwigs, and such like ?

Answ. 1. These things are of very different natures. Some of them, as stage-plays, cards and dice (though instances may be devised in which it is possible to use them lawfully) are so ordinarily used sinfully and so seldom well, that the trade that maintaineth them may well be supposed

to be a trade of maintaining sin. And had I a son, I had rather he begged his bread than have such a trade. But laces, and ribbands, and fine clothes, and feathers, and divers such things, have (among some that they are fit for) a more ordinary lawful use ; and therefore I cannot say such trades are sinful. 2. But yet because they are of so little benefit to the commonwealth, and so very frequently used to serve a vain and sinful lust and fancy, I take it to be a sin for any one to prefer such a trade before one that is more blameless and profitable, though the person might get more money by it. And they that will use such a trade without sin, must necessarily be so careful in distinguishing of customers, and not promiscuously sell to all who they perceive will serve their sin by it, that it will much diminish their gain. The case is much like an ale-seller's or vintner's which is lawful in itself, but must be used with so much distinguishing care as I doubt few practise, lest their gain be hindered. And therefore a safer trade is much to be preferred, which is not a continual temptation.

Quest. 2. ' May a servant dwell with and obey such a master, or lady, or mistress, as will command them to spend much of their time in trifles and vanities, that are but to please a proud or curious fancy ?'

Answ. 1. It must be supposed that many times servants, through sloth or education, misjudge those things to be needless or evil which are not such ; and think that their superiors should command them no other labour than what they like themselves. In this case their error will not justify their neglect. Persons of honour and dignity may lawfully go much further in employing their servants in dressing, and adornings, and attendance, and in washing, and rubbing rooms, and such smaller things, than lower persons, from whom it is not expected, and to whom the marks of wealth agree not, though none must be inordinate.

2. In mere doubtful cases servants are not the judges of their governor's commands and business ; and where they are no judges, and know no sin, they must submit.

3. Sometimes that which is sinfully commanded may be lawfully and dutifully obeyed. As it is a sin in a sick man to be peevish, and hardly pleased, and to command many needless things to a servant in that peevish humour ; when yet (they being lawful things to be done) the servant may be

bound to obey them. A patient may sinfully be humourous in his expectations, when a physician may yet lawfully please his humours for his health. A child may faultily cry for something, when the nurse may without fault give him that which he crieth for to quiet him. All is not forbidden the servant to do, which is forbidden the government to command.

4. But all that is sin in the doer must be forborne; and to serve and cherish the sin of others when we may choose, is sinful.

5. Therefore in such cases, though it be lawful for a servant to do many needless things (nor forbidden him by God) when commanded, it is unlawful to choose such a service, in which he shall be so employed, to spend his time in vanity, to satisfy a ruler's pride and humour, unless it be in case of true necessity, or probably to attain a greater good, which will compensate all the inconveniences. As if a pirate or tyrant command me to say some idle words, or do some needless action, or else my friend or I should be murdered; in this case they are not idle, or needless, or unlawful, but a duty, which voluntarily chosen would be a sin.

Object. 'By this you will make it a duty to obey papal commands of idle ceremonies, if we doubt, or if they be not things forbidden us.

Ans. 1. God hath not left us to so much liberty how to worship him, as he hath left us about our houses, and dresses, and common things.

2. The pope and his ministers are unlawful governors, as setting up an unlawful church policy, even a universal, human, ecclesiastical monarchy (or aristocracy, as the conciliar party hold), and therefore we owe them no obedience even in lawful things, and it is a sin to become their subjects.

3. Doubting whether real sin be sin, will not make it no sin, nor change the law of God. Should men be uncertain, whether rebellion, schism, fornication, perjury, or lying be sin, they may not therefore do it though it were commanded them; for no one hath true authority to command them.

4. But if really the thing be lawful to be done, we must do it, if commanded by such as have true authority to do it, though they mistake and sin in the reasons, ends, and manner of their command.

5. If a lawful magistrate or ruler sinfully command [say such or such a needless word, or do such a vain action, or wear such a vain habit (not forbidden us by God), or else you shall be silenced, banished, imprisoned], it ceaseth to be vain in the user, when it is made necessary to such ends, though it be sinfully commanded. But what God forbiddeth must never be done.

Quest. 'May the husband and master bear with sinful vanities in his wife and servants in his house? Seeing he is the ruler, is it not his sin to tolerate them?

Ans. 1. It is undoubtedly his sin to consent, or not to remedy it, if he can do it by lawful means. 2. It oft falls out that not only needless toys and vanities, but some downright great sins cannot be hindered effectually without so great inconveniences and mischiefs, as that such hindering becometh an unlawful means. If a man have a wife so passionate or unquiet, as that no means would restrain her tongue or hands but turning her away, or using such violence as is unsuitable to a conjugal relation, he must patiently endure her sin.

If he have a wife that will fall into some dangerous disease, or grow distracted, if she may not please her pride in apparel, or sinfully waste much in vain expenses, or may not use an unruly tongue to sin; or at least, if the restraint would cost the husband so dear as would by unquietness unfit him to serve God in his place; in this case it is no sinful toleration to endure it. He is far from consenting to it; he only restraineth not that which he cannot restrain. For what a man cannot do by lawful means, and without doing more hurt than good, it must be said that he cannot do it at all. And so much as a man may lawfully give to purchase his own peace and quietness, or to cure his wife of such a disease or distraction, so much he may lawfully suffer her to spend (though sinfully) to prevent it, as long as he disowneth the sin, and would remedy it, if he could by lawful means.

Object. 'If you tell women this, some will give their husbands no quietness, and some will waste their estates in sin, or vain expenses, to satisfy their lusts.'

Ans. 1. We must use no false doctrine for the preventing of such person's sin. If it be true, some men have need to know it. 2. It is possible that some rates of expense or suffering may be greater than the preventing of the wives'

calamity, and its consequences are worth ; and in such cases it cannot be so prevented. 3. And I hope the case is so rare, that most women's pride, exorbitancy, and passion, and the sins thence proceeding, may be restrained by other means at easier rates.'

Object. 2. 'But by this you would infer, that evils may also be tolerated in the church, if so far in the family.'

Ans. Consenting to any sin is sin, and so is doing that by promoting or tolerating, which signifieth consent ; but not to hinder that which we cannot hinder by lawful means, and without doing greater hurt than good, is no consenting or sinful toleration. Papists that are for burning and banishing dissenters, yet confess this, that they must tolerate them, when else they should more hurt the church by what is done against them.

It is no sin to bear with the greatest sin in the world which we cannot remedy, much less with human, common frailties, in which all mortal men must bear with one another, or else forsake all love and peace.

And this objection mindeth me humbly, but earnestly (though almost hopelessly) to desire all governors to take notice, that the pastoral government of Christ's church (being exercised under him, who calleth it his spouse and body) is very like the government of a husband over his wife, which must be done by no means inconsistent with love, and conjugal offices, and communion to the last. And therefore if men must bear with so many and great offences and inconveniences, yea, and sufferings, in and from a wife, for their household peace and quietness, let them consider whether for church peace, much evil is not to be endured when it cannot be lawfully hindered.

And if human frailty and darkness be such, as that few persons living have the same apprehensions of many or most things, and husband and wife about their ordinary affairs will daily manifest such difference of opinions and humours, as must be borne (or they must bear much worse), let pastors consider, while we agree in all things necessary to salvation and the common peace, how much diversity of sense, and consequently of practice, must be endured in the numerous difficulties of religion by them that know the way of peace. And whether they that will not bear a little are not preparing to bear much. And perhaps if the Roman clergy had

not been so much against priests' marriage the experience of their families, and what differing apprehensions and actions must there be borne by conjugal love, might have better taught them how far to bear with differing opinions and practices in religion, instead of their unchristian, inhuman laws and practices of burning, exterminating, and ruining all such as their judgments shall stigmatize as heretics.

Quest. 4. 'What are to be taken for sinful, needless studies, which scholars should avoid?'

Answ. 1. There is great cause to put this question, considering how many years are this way lost, and how little it is repented of, and how much is still owned and applauded by men of greatest reputation.

The case may be resolved by the same rules before given. 1. All learning and studies which are not worth the cost and labour. 2. All that do but serve that vain desire of knowledge which first tempted Eve to sin. 3. Much more all that which is but to serve men's sinful pride and worldly designs; and it were well with many students if their learning (or science, falsely so called, saith Paul) became not more plentiful and dangerous matter of pride and self-deceit than fine clothes and trifles do to women.

4. All that is worse than vain, which keepeth out greater and necessary things, and turneth the mind from holiness and heaven.

But the same knowledge in its proper place, and used in due subordination to the greatest things, and as a true means to the true end, is good and holy, which otherwise placed and used is doating vanity, and delusory dreaming; as too many ungodly students will find to their cost when it is too late. Therefore a sound judgment and holy will, by right intention of the end, and true discerning the aptitude of means, must resolve this case, and most of such cases through all our lives. Happy is he that is wise in things spiritual, and of everlasting consequence to God, and to salvation, though the world should deride him as unlearned, or a fool. And woe to him that is honoured for wit and policy, for many languages, and a rolling tongue, for the prudence of Ahithophel, or the learning of Aristotle, and hath not wisdom to live to God, to resist temptation, to escape damning sin, and to save his soul. It will do him no more good in

hell that he was cried up for a learned, or wise, or reverend man on earth, than it will do to dives (Luke xv.), that he was clothed in purple and silk, and fared sumptuously every day, and had his portion and good things where Lazarus had sorrow and contempt. More than one of the most famous scholars have at last cried out that all learning is vanity, save the knowledge of God in Christ, our duties, and our spiritual and endless benefits and hopes.

I have told you of many evils that come by the preference of unnecessary or less necessary things, but one remaineth to be noted, which the text expresseth in Martha's instance. While she is over careful, and troubled about many things, which were then less necessary, she thinks her sister should have been of the same mind, and done as she did, and grudgeth at her, and accuseth her to Christ, as if Mary's work had been less necessary than hers; which sheweth us,

Observ. That they that choose unnecessary or less necessary employments, are apt to account religious exercises less necessary, and to censure those that choose them.

The wrong censuring of Mary's choice and work was as much of Martha's fault as her own worst choice and needless trouble. Those that sin against knowledge, and confess they do ill, are often desirous that their children and friends should do better. But they that think their sin is their duty, will censure those that sin not with them, as if it were sin to fear sin, and avoid it. And no wonder. For, 1. That which is true to one, is true to another; and that which is best to one, as a common duty, is best to another. And it is natural to us to desire that our friends should know what we know, and choose that common good which we choose, and avoid the error, sin, and misery which we avoid. Our love to truth and goodness will make us desire that they may be common. And our love to our friends will make us desire that they may be happy by choosing what is best. And the love of ourselves maketh men desire that others may be of their mind and way. As God first loveth himself, and next that which is most like himself, so naturally doth a selfish man. Though a holy man as such first loveth God, and then that which is most like God; yet when he erreth, he thinketh that to be like God which is not. And then even the love of God also will be abused to the promoting of er-

ror, and the angry censuring of truth and duty. No doubt but Martha's love to Christ himself, was abused by her error, to censure her sister that did not serve him in the way that she thought then most necessary.

2. And when several things are contrary or inconsistent, the overvaluing of the one must needs cause the undervaluing and rejecting of the other; the weighing down of one end of the balance will lift up the other. As all men that are earthly minded are so much the less spiritual and heavenly, and he that loveth the world hath the less love to God, so they that overvalue unnecessary things, will naturally grow into a greater disesteem of things truly necessary; contrary things cannot be both at once preferred (in the same respect); when unnecessary things seem necessary, inconsistent necessary things will seem unnecessary.

All this we see verified constantly in our experience, in men's judging both for themselves and others.

1. Mark any that grow more in loving and caring for unnecessary worldly, fleshly things, and you shall find that they grow more indifferent to prayer, and to all holy exercises that employ the mind; a little of this will serve their turn. Mark them that overmind their ornaments, their conveniences, their appetites, or their worldly gain, and you shall see how heartless and dead they grow towards God, and holiness, and heaven; when shadows seem substances, the substance goeth but for a shadow. A little of God will serve them, when a little of the world will not serve them; and spiritual things lose all their sweetness, when fleshly pleasures and hopes grow too sweet.

2. And you shall see that such persons do judge accordingly of others. Their love of vanity maketh serious religion seem a vanity to them. When they are over eager for the flesh or world, they judge God's service to be over earnest in religion. When we wonder what they can find in an empty world to take up all their thoughts and hearts, their talk, labour, and time, they wonder what we find in religion to take up ours. As we say to them, 'What needs all this ado for vanity? Cannot you have food and a grave without this overmuch care and trouble?' so they say to us, 'What needs all this ado in religion? Cannot a man be saved without so much violence and stir? Is God so illnatured that no less will please him?' Thus God must be thought to be like them;

(Psal. l.), and to leave his holiness when they leave theirs, (or never had it,) and to grow indifferent and reconcilable to sin when once they love it.

And when serious godliness is thus rejected by themselves, it first seemeth in others to be but a needless, honest superstition, the effect of a weak judgment, and a timorous and trembling heart; and afterward they grow on to call it foolishness, and entitle it as Christ did Martha's case, a care and trouble about many unnecessary things. And from thence many grow to think it evil; and from thence to think it the most insufferable evil, and to take serious conscience of our duty to God to be the greatest rebel against kings, and the greatest troubler of the land, the greatest schismatic, and the most dangerous enemy, and most intolerable plague; and so they proceed to hellish malignity and cruel persecution. This is the natural progress of overvaluing and overminding needless things.

3. And alas, not only the history of thirteen hundred years, but the notice of our own age hath told us, that even in the churches the same cause hath produced the same effect, when many needless and troublesome things are overvalued and thought necessary. Mary is accused, and her hearing so much preaching is taken for the effect of idleness, or itching ears. In the church of Rome, where things first called indifferent have been preferred, true knowledge, explicit faith, spiritual worship, and a holy life, are taken to be necessary only to some few votaries, or saints that are to be canonized as wonders, and not to all that will be saved; and a mass of ceremonies hath shut out mostly serious preaching, praying, and holy living; their tree beareth sometimes only leaves, and at other times the pricks of thorns and thistles. Images pretended to be for the honour of departed saints are cherished, where saints and sanctity are hated; as their forefathers the Pharisees, Matt. xxiii. "They build the sepulchres of the prophets and righteous men," and condemn those that murdered them, and keep holy days in honour of them, and go on implacably to kill those that imitate them, and to do as their forefathers did that persecuted them. Ceremony is become the substance of too many men's religion, and an image and shadow of faith and godliness. Justice and charity hath taken place of life and substance. Too many churches are filled with statues and carcasses instead

of real saints. The shell, which is but to keep the kernel, is valued in its stead, and the kernel cast away instead of the shell. The letter, which is for the signification of the sense, is first taken up as enough without it, and then turned as an enemy against it; and the oft-repeated names of Jesus, and Mary, and saints, are used first instead of holy love to Jesus and saints, and then to cherish a malignant, murderous hatred of them that are saints indeed within their reach. It was St. Dominic, and such other of their holy men, that promoted the murder of real saints, even of many thousands, if not hundred thousands; do but call them Heretics, Waldenses, Albigenes, Lutherans, Zuinglians, Calvinists, Hugonots, Bigots, Lollards, Whigs, Puritans, and then conscience is as loose and free to hate, revile, imprison, silence or murder them, as if they were so many robbers or rebels, or as bad as their accusers and persecutors, feign them. Paul doth foretel that in the last days some shall be haters of those that are good, and *διάβολοι*, devils, which we translate false accusers, and yet have a form of godliness, while they deny the power. Diabolism begins in false accusation, and proceedeth to the most cruel persecution. What on earth can be more like a devil, than first to print such horrid lies of the servants of Christ, as they have done of Luther, Zuinglius, Bucer, Calvin, Beza, and the reformed churches, and then to torture and burn such as heretics, and to make it a law and part of their religion to compel princes to do the like in all generations to come; and even to burn the bones of the dead, as they did by Bucer, Phagius, and Wickliff: yea, to murder them by thousands, as in France, and by hundred thousands, as in Ireland; and all this began with the overvaluing unnecessary things, worldly pomp, and power, and wealth, and pleasure, and images, ceremonies, and formalities! What dreadful work was made about images against the Eastern emperors! How many councils of bishops were the authors of schism and rebellion for them! And at last for them did the pope rebelliously cast off his sovereign, and cut off the Western empire from him, and give it (as if it had been his own) to the French. To this day, do but speak against their deified wafer, or their mass, of ceremonies, or their adoring images, or their false doctrine, or their papal or prelatical tyranny and usurpation, and you presently deserve to be painted with the picture of devils,

and after the torment of the inquisition, to be cursed from Christ, and burned to ashes ; and all this as for Christ, the church, and faith.

And the German Interim told the world whither the overvaluing of things, called indifferent, doth tend, when the churches were deserted, the ministers silenced and persecuted, and sadly divided among themselves, and the reformation almost overthrown ; and all because the pastors refused to conform to a book compiled by the emperor's command, by a few self-conceited bishops, pretending to be moderate reconcilers, obtruding divers of the Romish formalities as the means of the peace and concord of the churches. It would grieve one's heart to read what confusions this imposed book, called "The Interim," did cause.

But alas, they are not the only instances of the calamitous effects of the overvaluing and obtruding unnecessary things. As the ruins of Troy long told spectators what a war for one Helena, a beautiful whore, did cost that part of the world (which became the subjects of the famous poems of divers ages), even so the ruins of the Eastern churches, sometime the most great and famous in the world, and now the habitation of owls and serpents, deluded Mahometans, with some ignorant, sad, oppressed Christians, proclaim to all that read, hear, or see them, what are the fruits of striving about unnecessary things, even about worldly preeminence and wealth ; which patriarch should be greatest, and which bishop should sit highest, and go first, and have his will, and pass for the most orthodox, or have most followers ; and about ambiguous words, who it was that spake most wisely, and who should make the words of other men's creeds and professions (for the trade of making liturgies, which whole nations or provinces must be confined to, was not set up till after that of making creeds). In a word, church wars, 1. About the jurisdiction of prelates ; especially whether Rome or Constantinople should be the chief. 2. And about hard and doubtful words. 3. And about images and ceremonies, have laid East and West in the condition of apostacy, desolation, shame, and slavery, in which with amazement we see them at this day.

And what are all the religious wars, murders, and cruelties exercised for by the papal party, but that one prelate and his confederates may be the masters of all the Christian

world, and may have their wills in all religious matters directly, and in all civil matters in order to the religious; and that all their laws may be obeyed, their formalities used, and their words believed? Killing, burning, tormenting, and confounding, seem not too dear to accomplish this. "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" Who would think, that never before saw it, that a little gunpowder should blow up houses as it doth! And who would have thought that so many churches, kingdoms, lives, and souls should have been blown up, or ruined, as they have been, for the unnecessary domination, wealth, formalities, and ceremonies of the clergy.

I have often, too often, heard preachers themselves, instead of a sermon, pour out scorns against those that preached and lived more seriously, strictly, and holily than themselves. And I have too oft heard the common rabble revile them that were most careful and diligent for salvation, as a company of Precisians, Puritans, and hypocrites. And I have thought with myself, Have these men found better and greater things to lay out their own care, time, and labour for? And alas, I perceived that instead of God, and Christ, and holiness, and heaven, they had nothing to take them up but vanity and vexation; their bellies, and their purses, and their walls, and their titles, and their pride, and lust, and selfish wills; and are these more necessary than Mary's choice? Mark what those persons are saying and doing every day, who think serious godliness to be overdoing; and you shall see, that instead of it, some are doing nothing, and some worse than nothing; wasting their short time, deceiving and destroying themselves and others.

And indeed it is not possible that any one that is a serious Christian himself, and hath tried truly a holy life, should think it needless, or make it a matter of reproach to others. But we grant that particular duties may be misplaced, and prudence is necessary to know their time, and length, and manner; and it is possible, both that a Mary may sometimes here imprudently overdo, and that a Martha may by mistake be quarrelsome, and accuse the innocent, that yet is not against serious piety itself. Therefore I think meet to annex these two cautions to the hearers in this case.

I. Do not presently take yourselves to be truly godly, because some others accuse you of overdoing, or of being re-

ligious overmuch. Every one is not a saint that is derided for sanctity; every one doth not sincerely preach, hear, pray, or practise, that is derided for these things. If you have no better evidence of grace, than that some call you Puritans, Precisians, or such like, it will be an insufficient evidence. 1. Bad men will deride those that seem holy, though they are not so. 2. And good men in their faulty weakness, may misjudge of the circumstances of your duty, and unjustly blame you, and yet you may not be sincere in the main. 3. And you may actually mistake in circumstances yourselves, and deserve the blame that is cast upon you. The Pharisees were overstrict for the Sabbath, and in avoiding publicans and sinners, and thought Christ too loose. Judas pretendeth more charity to the poor than Christ had. That is not most right which seemeth strictest, but that which is most agreeable to the law of God. Though some misapply Solomon's words, Eccles. vii. 16. "Be not righteous overmuch, neither make thyself overwise;" as if it had been written against serious, diligent, obedience to God, and true proper righteousness and wisdom; yet we must know that it was written by the Holy Ghost, and not in vain. A pharisaical, superstitious sort of religion, and observation of vain traditions, and a zealous strictness which God never commanded, is a righteousness equivocally so called, and it is overmuch. Such is much of the popish righteousness, and such is the affected austerity of several sects, old and new. "Touch not, taste not, handle not," are oft a human, counterfeit righteousness, which God doth neither require nor accept. As God liketh not a popish charity, that killeth or tormenteth men in love to God and religion; so neither doth he like those superstitious austerities which destroy our own bodies, and disable us from cheerful thankfulness and obedience; which maketh Solomon say, "Why should thou be desolate (or destroy thyself?)" That is good which is fitted to do good. All grace and duty is for edification.

II. And as every one is not truly godly who is derided as godly by the profane, or blamed for some superstitious strictness, so you must not take every one for malignant or ungodly who speaketh against such strictness, as either is real superstition, or seemeth so or worse to him.

For 1. If you are guilty of superstition it is a friendly office to shew you your mistake. 2. And if you are in the

right, and another that is in the wrong misaccuseth you, in many cases his error may stand with love to truth and holiness in the main. Every one is not ungodly who misreproach us with the Anabaptists for baptizing infants. Or with the Antinomians as setting up the abrogated law ; and so of many others. As men differ in judgment about God's law, they will accuse each other's differing practice. But opposing serious godliness as such is another thing.

And indeed it is usual with malignant enemies of a holy life, to make themselves a religion of formalities, and imagery, and shadows, to quiet their consciences while they resist the truth, that it may not seem to be an act of impiety and malignity which they do, but an opposition to the faults of others.

But the use which you should make of this lesson is this: Take heed lest you be tempted to an overvaluing of any unnecessary or less needful things, whether it be wealth and honour, or fleshly interest ; or else any formalities, or things indifferent about religion, lest before you are aware (as imagery stole away the hearts of the old idolaters from God, so) these should secretly consume your holy zeal, and turn your hearts from the life and serious exercise of religion, and worshipping God in spirit and truth, and afterwards draw you to condemn that zeal and diligence in others which you want yourselves. We have bodies as well as souls, and must have a just regard to bodily necessities ; and a care that our bodies do their duty. But let the body and its interest keep their place. Remember how far it is below the soul, and use it, and all its interests accordingly. The least things that are good are not to be despised. But alas, what work is made by preferring little things ! The traditions of their fathers, their tithing mint, and annise, their washings, their building the sepulchres of the prophets, their domination, pomp, and ceremonies, did pass with the Pharisees instead of the great things of the law, and sacrifice went before mercy, truth, and judgment ; yea, and become a cloak for devouring widow's houses, and for persecuting and silencing the preachers of the Gospel, and for slandering and murdering Christ himself.

What ruins this hath made in souls, churches, and kingdoms, I have already told you. Know therefore wherein God's kingdom doth consist ; Rom. xiv. 17, 18. And what and whom God bindeth you to approve, and learn what this

meaneth, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice," that you may not deceive yourselves, or condemn the guiltless. Even Martha will murmur at her dear sister, and accuse her, if she be herself but tainted with this ill disease.

But whose part doth Christ take? And which of them doth he justify? The defendant Mary; and that, 1. With a compassionate reproof of Martha. 2. With the reason of Mary's justification. 3. And with a sentence of blessing added to her defence. Whence we learn,

Doct. 2. 'That when wiser Christians, and their better choice and work are accused by them that preferred less needful things, Christ will be the advocate and judge, and will defend and justify the wrongfully accused.' He will in this case take the accused's part.

Martha accuseth her sister to Christ, she expecteth that he should blame her as neglecting her duty, and leaving all the trouble and care on Martha. But Christ doth not answer her expectation, but justifieth the wise and innocent.

Reason 1. For it is his office to be both the advocate and the judge. And he will do it in perfection, without error or injustice. He well knoweth who is in the right, and none can deceive him by false accusations or false witnesses.

2. He is so nearly related and deeply obliged to defend the innocent or just, that he will never fail them. They are his members, and his love engageth him. He spared not his life and blood for them, and will he not speak for them? They are his purchase, and interest, his peculiar redeemed ones, and will he forsake his interest, and his own?

3. Indeed in plain justice he is bound to justify them against such injurious accusations. For it is he that commandeth them to do what they are accused of. It is for obeying him. If it were a fault, it would be his that bid them do it. Nay, how much hath he done to bring his servants to that holy choice, and faithful duty, which in the world they are commonly accused for! Alas, we were not forward to it of ourselves. It was not we that made the law, which so strictly forbiddeth sin, and commandeth duty. The Bible is not of our making. It is not we that made the law to "love God with all our heart, and soul, and might; and our neighbour as ourselves; not to take his name in vain, to worship God in spirit and in truth," &c. And it was a higher cause than our own power which taught us, and in-

clined our hearts to obey these. Many a message did Christ send us, by his Bible, ministers, and Spirit, before we were heartily drawn to yield. Many a day's patience did he use, and many a threatening to drive us to it, and many a mercy and promise to draw us, and many a book and teacher to instruct us, yea, and many an affliction to correct us; and will he not justify us for that which he so earnestly commandeth us, and with so much ado doth bring us to obey? Did he come into the world, and live, and die, to save his people from their sins, and purify to himself "a peculiar people, zealous of good works (Tit. ii. 14.), and will he forsake them when they are accused for obeying him? Where shall we meet with a man of any common honesty that would do thus by his poorest servant? And shall not the Judge of all the earth do righteously? For our parts, if we are accused for serious piety, or any duty which Christ commandeth us, it is his command that was our reason and obligation, and which we have to allege for our defence. If that have not authority and truth enough to justify us, we have no other justification. Indeed Christ should forsake himself if he thus deserted us. He should take the blame upon his own laws, yea, and on all the works of his grace and Spirit, and all that he hath done to bring us to that which the world and our flesh was so much against.

4. He defendeth his disciples against the Pharisees' accusations on earth, and will he afterwards forsake them?

5. He hath appointed the great day to judge the world in righteousness, even the secrets of men, and to bring all things open into the manifesting light, even all truth and falsehood, and all the hidden works of darkness. Therefore undoubtedly all truth, all righteousness, and all that is of God, shall be fully justified, and God's truth in all, when false accusers shall be all called liars.

Use. This being then so plain and sure, I would commend the consideration of it to several sorts, and in several instances. I. To the accusers of the godly for their duty to God. II. To the accused. III. To those that are yet in doubt what cause to choose.

I. The unjust accusers of just men are of divers degrees or sorts.

1. Some there be that only accuse them in their thoughts, and take them to be guilty when they are not.

2. Others go further, and too easily believe false reports from others : and then think that they are allowed to tell what they have heard, and so to vend such false reports. And if they can but say, either that it was a great man, or a learned man, or a minister, or a religious man that said it, they think that their calumny or backbiting is no sin. But much more, if many such report it ; and yet more, if they heard none contradict it.

3. Others there be, that because it serveth their interest or design, or pleaseth their malignant minds, do make it part of their business purposely to carry about such reports, and persuade as many as they can to believe them, and plead down those that contradict them.

4. Others go further, and are the first devisers, or the malicious increasers of the slanderous reports themselves ; not only the spreaders or carriers, but the fathers of the lies which they send about by others.

5. Yet some go further, and studiously and maliciously publish them in pulpits, or in print, to draw the world and posterity to believe them ; yea, and this as for God, and as for the church and truth ; as if it were but the detecting of heresies or lies, or dangerous faults or practices of others.

6. And yet further, some in most ages and countries, in offices and places of judicature, who should be the pillars of justice, do pass false sentences against the just, and pronounce them guilty, and persecute and oppress them by their unrighteous punishments.

7. And yet worse ; some slander not only the persons, but the cause of truth, piety, and righteousness itself, and make false laws and canons, calling good evil, and decreeing the common slandering of the truth, and the punishing of the innocent, because they will not break the laws of God, and please proud mistaking men before him.

To all these sorts of accusers of the just, I would give (would they hear me) this following advice :

1. I advise you to stay, and think well of the matter, and be sure that you have thoroughly tried it before you venture to pass your judgment. It is not so small a matter as you think, to wrong the just, and say, I was mistaken. And especially will you be first sure what side Christ will take ? and whether he will be of the accuser's mind.

And Christ hath so fully told us his mind already in his

word, that we may certainly foreknow what judgment he will pass.

(1.) Do you accuse men for pretending to the Spirit, and to be holy? Why, Christ hath said, that "Except a man be born of water, and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven;" John iii. 6. And "without holiness none shall see God;" Heb. xii. 14. And "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his;" Rom. viii. 9.

(2.) Do you accuse godly men for singularity, and for differing from others in their religious diligence and zeal? If they differ from the common faith of Christians, or single themselves from the communion of saints, or from the love and concord of believers, Christ will not justify them in this. For he hath said, "A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition avoid;" Tit. iii. 10. And "by this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if ye have love one to another;" John xiii. 34, 35. And "Mark those that cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them;" Rom. xvi. 17.

But if it be differing from unbelievers, or ungodly men, or formal hypocrites, by a holy resolution to live wholly to God, and obey his laws, whoever be against it; if this be the singularity you mean, Christ is engaged to bear them out. For it is he that hath commanded this, and said, "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you;" John xv. 14. "If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love;" ver. 10. "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven;" Matt. v. 20. "What do you more than others?" ver. 47. "He purifieth to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works;" Tit. ii. 14. Lot differed from Sodom, and Noah differed from all the old world. The wise differ from the foolish, and the righteous from the wicked; or else there would not be hereafter so great a difference as of heaven and hell. What is a physician good for if he make not his patients to differ from the sick? And what came Christ to do, or how is he a Saviour, if he make not his disciples differ from the ungodly world? Even a philosopher would not set up a school, but to make his scholars differ from the unlearned.

(3.) Is it for so much preaching and hearing that you ac-

cuse men? It is possible indeed to do a duty unreasonably, and to overdo in one thing, when it causeth the omission of other duties. But certainly Christ that so strictly commandeth his ministers to preach, and as they love him to feed his flock, will justify them for so doing. How shall they believe without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?" Rom. x. And he that said, "He that heareth you, heareth me," and that here justifieth Mary's hearing, will justify all others in the like case: for he hath bid us (by Solomon) to "get wisdom as the principal thing;" Prov. iv. 5. 7. "To incline the ear, and apply the heart to it; to cry after knowledge, and lift up the voice for understanding; to seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasure;" Prov. xxii. 3, 4. "Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me, findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord;" Prov. viii. 33—36.

(4.) Is it for much praying that you accuse men? Why, Christ bid his disciples "pray always, and not faint;" Luke xviii. 1, 2. And pray continually; 1 Thess. v. 17.

(5.) Is it for so much ado in their families, in the religious education of their children, and reading the Scriptures that you accuse men? Why, it is God that hath said, "These words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up," &c. Deut. vi. 7—10. xi. 18—20. An angel was sent from heaven unto Cornelius when he was fasting and praying in his house, to signify God's acceptance, and tell him further how to be saved. Daniel would rather be cast to lions, than forbear praying in his house for certain days, when the king and laws forbade him. You may easily know then which side Christ will take.

(6.) Is it for scrupling things which others scruple not; and taking that for sin which others say is none, and so not doing as others do, that you accuse men?

If they mistake, and think that to be sin which is not, Christ will justify their desire to please him, and their fear of sinning, but he will not justify their mistake. But if it be sin indeed, whatever men call it, he will justify our avoid-

ing and abhorring it. He that died for sin, would not have us love it, nor run into the consuming fire, from which he came to save us. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." The accuser may call it folly, and precise scrupulosity, but God saith to man, "Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding;" Job xxviii. 28. If we sin with others, we must suffer with them.

(7.) But perhaps it is for not keeping their faith and religion to themselves, but making so much ado to propagate them, that you accuse men.

Indeed Paul, speaking of the knowledge and belief of the lawfulness of lawful, necessary things, saith, "Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God;" Rom. xiv. 21. That is, enjoy thy own knowledge and liberty, but use it not so as to tempt and ruin others. But surely it is Christ that hath said, "Ye are the lights of the world, that must not be put under a bushel;" Matt. v. And, "He that gathereth not with us, scattereth abroad;" Matt. xii. 30. And, "Whoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father," &c. Matt. x. 32. And, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation;" Rom. x. 10. We must love our neighbours as ourselves, and therefore desire and seek their salvation: "He that seeth his brother have need, (for his body) and shutteth up the bowels of his compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" Much less if he have no pity for souls. While we have opportunity we must do good to all men. Gal. vi. 10. The slothful servant that hid his talent is condemned to utter darkness. Matt. xxv. What do we in the world but to receive good, and do good? And how little goodness is in that which tendeth not to men's salvation? What are we made, redeemed, and preserved for, but to serve God, and seek the good of ourselves and others? You accuse not men of giving money to the poor and needy; and is not holiness much better? If money be better than grace, not only Simon Magus was excusable, but Cæsar might be a greater benefactor than Christ. Do you believe a heaven, and do you accuse men for seeking to help men to attain it? Unthankful, miserable sinners, that accuse men for endeavouring to save them from sin and endless misery! Were they drowning, they would not ac-

cuse men for labouring to save their lives. None but madmen strive against those that would heal or help them; but it is here no wonder, when the Saviour of the world was as madly and unthankfully used by such sinners: how can we expect that he will accept our help, who despiseth or refuseth God's?

(8.) But perhaps it is their zeal and earnestness in religion that you accuse; and think that they should be, as you call it, more moderate; that is, indifferent and cold.

Indeed imprudent, passionate rashness, and erroneous zeal and factious violence, which is more for self-interest and self-conceit, than for the truth and cause of Christ, is a thing which he will never justify. If James and John have such a feverish zeal, he will tell them, "You know not what manner of spirit ye are of." Where an envious, striving, masterly zeal is, he tells them it is not from above, but the wisdom which it pretendeth to is earthly, sensual and devilish, tending to confusion, and every evil work. Christ is no patron of popish, tyrannical, persecuting, destroying, hurtful zeal; but surely he will justify the zeal of love, and of good works: not zealous slandering, railing, and false censuring; but zealous preaching, praying and praising God, and a zealous diligence in all that he commandeth, and a zealous care to mortify fleshly lusts, and avoid sin, and escape damnation, and to glorify God. It is a base contempt and dishonouring of God, and Christ, and holiness, and heaven, to think or speak of them, or seek them, with a cold indifferency, as if they were but common needless things.

How eagerly do worldlings seek the world, and proud men strive to climb into some honour, before they fall into the grave and hell! How violent do many earthly rulers strive to enlarge their dominions, and have their wills, though by the ruin of countries, and the blood of many thousand innocents! How hot are all these worldly men, (even popes and prelates, that say they believe a better world) against all how wise and holy soever, that are against their worldly interest! How fervently did they cry against Christ himself, "Away with him, crucify him!" How furiously did they gnash their teeth at Stephen, and stone him! And cried out against Paul, "Away with such a fellow from the earth, it is not fit that he should live!" The devil is earnest to destroy us. The zeal of infidels, papists and church-tyrants

is burning hot, and no reason, no worth or innocency of the just, will serve to quench it. And is it only God's service and our salvation that must be coldly managed and sought? Is it only that which we are born for, and live for, that must be thrust behind the door, or done as if we did it not? Is it heaven and hell that must be jested with? And souls that must be ventured for a little wealth or lust, or our endless hope cast away for nothing? Idols that have eyes and see not, deserve no better service than the hypocrites imagery, and stage religion; but do you think the God of love and glory can be loved, honoured or obeyed too much? None but the atheistical fool can think so. How quickly, how certainly will you all wish that God and your salvation had been loved, and sought with all your hearts, and strength, and time, and that he that is All had had your All, and that you had been as holy as the holiest of men! O hypocrites, that daily pray that "God's name may be hallowed, his kingdom come, and his will done on earth as it is done in heaven;" and yet accuse those as doing too much, that, alas! fall far short of the lowest of all the heavenly inhabitants!

(9.) But perhaps they are accused for not serving God just as men command them, and not being of the religion of those that are uppermost.

This hath indeed been the common accusation. But, 1. God is uppermost, and will be; therefore they are resolved to be as near as they can of his mind that is uppermost, and will prevail.

2. Christ went against the rulers of his time, and commanded his apostles so to do, and so did they, and so did the church for three hundred years, and in much of the world ever since.

3. Must we have as many religions as princes have? And must we change our religion as oft as we change our country? Must a man be a heathen under heathens, and a Mahometan under Turks and Persians? And a Papist under Papists, and a Socinian under Socinians, and so on? If not, how shall we know which prince's religion it is that we must be of, and which we must refuse, but by the word of God, which we must ourselves discern (using the best helps of teachers that we can get)? We thank God that we have rulers that so far own truth and righteousness as they do;

but even the apostle saith, they were not lords, "nor had dominion over their faith, but were their helpers;" 2 Cor. i. 24. "As stewards of the mysteries of God;" 1 Pet. v. 1. 3.

4. Why do you honour the martyrs, and keep holidays in remembrance of their sufferings, who died rather than they would obey man against God, if you think we must always be of the ruler's religion? Did the three witnesses so? Dan. iii. Or Daniel himself? Dan. vi. The common case is much like Daniel's: "We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God" (Dan. vi. 5.); which they did for praying when the law forbade him. They could find no fault with Christ and his apostles, but for not observing their traditions, and for worshipping God contrary to the law, and doing contrary to the decrees of Cæsar. Acts xviii. 13. xvii. 5. Matt. xv. God's law is perfect, man's is not so: though we cannot ourselves attain perfection in understanding our practice, yet we will choose and set before us a perfect rule, even the perfect law of the perfect Ruler of the world. If we must be all of the prince's or state's religion, where one country hath the true religion, many will have a false one: and when we are right in one point, we may be wrong in another, our copy being so.

(10.) But perhaps it is error, sin, sedition, sects, schism, scandal, that you accuse men of: if that be it, if you do it truly, and do not slander them, certainly Christ will not justify them in these.

1. If you accuse them falsely he will justify them.

2. If they have sinned, and truly believe, and repent, and amend, he will pardon them through his meritorious righteousness and sacrifice, and will make them and pronounce them just.

3. And he will justify in them all that is his own and good, notwithstanding their pardonable infirmities, and will not make their faults greater than they are, but will see the willingness of the spirit when the flesh is weak. If malignant men will see the mote of a ceremonious error or frailty in their brother's eye, and call it a beam because a beam is in their own, Christ will not join with them in their malignity and injustice, but will bid him cast the first stone that is without sin. John viii. 7.

4. And yet he will not justify the least sinful thought,

or word, or deed, nor the least faulty imperfection in their faith, love or obedience : for no man hateth any of these so much as Christ doth, in whomsoever they are found. Do you cry out against error, sedition, rebellion, disobedience, schism, divisions ? So doth Christ, and so do all his true disciples ; we all agree with you in this. But if the question be either, ‘ Who they are that are herein guilty ? ’ Or, ‘ In whom any sin is reigning, wilful and unpardoned ? ’ Here see that you go not beyond proof ; for Christ will not own the condemners of the just, nor confirm any man’s unrighteous and malicious censure.

2. And as I advise you before you accuse any, to know whether Christ be of your mind, and will be against them, or will take their parts ; so next I advise you, as you love yourselves, to think well how great a sin malignant and false accusing is.

1. It sheweth much of the devil in your hearts ; whether you see it or not, it is no better : he is malicious, a murderer, a liar, and the accuser of the just, and slanders are called by his name, *διάβολοι*, as aforesaid.

2. If it be for Christ’s cause, for truth or righteousness, or done in malice, against godliness or faith, Christ taketh it all as done against himself ; Matt. xxv. For it is not only against his servants, but also for their obeying and serving him : it is he that commanded them, as is aforesaid.

3. You set yourself against the office also of Christ ; he is the advocate of his servants, he hath undertaken their defence, and do you think to overcome him ? It is he that justifieth us, (for all that faith, and zeal, and holiness, for which we are accused and persecuted by the world) who then shall condemn us ? It is he that is for us, who then is he that will be against us ? Shall we not be more than conquerors through him whose power hath conquered for us, and whose victorious love will not forsake us ? Rom. viii. 34., &c. Remember in what a manner he said, “ Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks ; ” Acts ii. And to him that offendeth one of those little despised ones that believe in him, that “ it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.”

And it is not only to the gross persecuting accusers of the just that I give this advice, but I beseech you all to take

heed of any rash accusing of the just ; for the wrong is most to God himself, and the hurt to you, and Christ will be against you.

1. Some there are, that when they have by ignorance, or a stretching conscience, for worldly interest consented to some sinful practices, are led by that same unhappy interest, to justify first what they do themselves, and then to accuse all those as erroneous, precise, or schismatical that are against their choice and practice. Most men that live in sin for interest, do think that they must be secured from the accusations of conscience, and the disgrace of sinning, by justifying their sin, and accusing those as the sinners that are against it, and dare not sin as much as they ; but how sad a defence will this prove at last, which so much addeth to their crime !

2. There are some on the contrary, that in ignorance having taken a duty or lawful practice for a sin, (as baptizing infants, singing David's psalms, praying constantly in families, observing the Lord's day, praying oft in the same words, communicating with some faulty churches, or such as these men condemn, and such like,) they hereupon become the rash and false accusers of those that be not as erroneous as themselves ; thus did the Pharisees by Christ and his apostles ; thus did the Jewish teachers, that said, " Except ye be circumcised, and keep the law of Moses, ye cannot be saved ;" Acts xv. Thus did the Jewish Christians against Peter, " They contended with him, saying, thou wentest into men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them ;" Acts xi. 23. And after his miraculous conviction by this censoriousness, they drew him to that separation which Paul doth blame him for ; Gal. ii. 12—14. and Barnabas and others dissembled with him, for fear of the censures of these erroneous men ; for it is not the least mischievous effect of these false accusations and censures that they frighten many weak Christians from duty and into sin, while they hear that this or that is no duty, or is some heinous sin, and have not the understanding to try and judge, they are carried away with the name and noise ; and some such as Peter and Barnabas walk not uprightly, but step out of the way for fear of displeasing them, or being accused by them, as others are ; and it is not a little shame, guilt and suffering, that this course hath brought upon the ministers themselves.

3. And there are some that here more heinously offend, Familists, Ranters, Seekers, Quakers, and too many more ; that while they are guilty themselves of lamentable errors, fear not to accuse almost all the churches of Christ on earth, as if they were not his church at all, and had no true religion, ministry, ordinances, and were not to be communicated with. The Papists that burn men as heretics for the truth, I think accuse not so many of Christ's ministers and churches, not so deeply as some of these sects do ; yea, and father this malignity on the Spirit of God ; but Christ will defend and justify his churches against all these false accusers.

O little do either Papists or any other sectaries know how heinous a crime Christ will take it, to accuse the greatest part of Christians on earth as being heretics, schismatics, or no true churches, or having no true religion or part in Christ, or in his Spirit ; and for a worldly faction on one side, or a sick-brained, self-conceited sect on the other side, to appropriate the title of the church or saints to themselves alone, and say to most of the members of Christ, ' You are none of his ! ' If to accuse falsely one man when his estate only is concerned in it, and that before a single judicature, be so great a crime as Scripture maketh it, what is it openly before God and the world, rashly or falsely to accuse whole churches and countries of Christians, yea, the faithfulest of Christ's ministers, with bitter scorns, as many of the afore-said sectaries do ; yea, almost all the church of Christ, in this and almost all former ages ! For my part (though some censure me for it), I am afraid of too bold censuring even of Papists, or of honest heathens, such as were Antonine, Cicero, and such others that never heard the Gospel of Christ.

II. My next advice is to those that are thus accused by others about religion, or of sin.

1. Do not presently justify yourselves, because you love not to be blamed ; rash self-justifying may be more hurtful to you than other men's rash accusing you. Error and sin are not so rare things, even among good men, that it should be taken for hard measure to be judged erroneous and sinners : who knoweth his secret faults ? Psal. xix. We must daily pray, " Forgive us our trespasses." Little do most know how great a number of falsehoods are received into the minds of most good Christians in the world, yea, of the best, much more of the more ignorant sort ; and therefore we have

great cause to be still cautiously suspicious of ourselves : and it is a mercy to have notice of our sins and errors from whomsoever, friends or foes.

Try therefore, lest it should prove an error or sin that you are accused of; confess it not to be such because another calleth it such; but yet let him know that you are willing of his help for your information and conviction.

It is supposed that none of us love error as error, or sin as sin, or any evil as such; it is no evil that is the object of a sinner's will and choice, but a misplaced good, even a lesser good set against or instead of a greater: (as the creature instead of the Creator, and corporal instead of spiritual, &c.) We do not love and will '*malum, sed male,*' not evil, but evilly: it is not the thing loved that is evil itself, but the act of loving it, (or doing it.) The fruit that Adam did eat was not evil, but eating it was; meat, drink, pleasurable objects, beauty, money, lands, honours, are all good, but the inordinate love and use of them is the evil.

Our nature therefore giveth this advantage to our monitors; we would all be delivered from evil as evil, and therefore thankfully accept their help.

'*Humanum est errare;*' how little doth that man know himself, or what man is, who taketh it for an injury to be supposed to have errors? But to deny necessary saving verities, or to be unwilling to see our errors by finding out the truth, or proudly to defend them, because we have once owned them, and to be rash and confident propagators of such errors, and to rage against wiser men that are against our folly, and ignorantly to cry them down as ignorant, and to charge all this on the Spirit of God, this is an unchristian and inhuman sort of erring. Try therefore with a due suspicion of yourselves, lest your accusation should be true, and you be found in the mistake.

The same I say when you are accused of any sin: alas, sin is not so rare a thing with any of us, but that we may well fear and try the case, lest we should be guilty.

2. My next advice is, Take heed lest you go about to interest Christ in any of your sins or errors, or lest you expect that he should justify them. It is a greater sin which many erring men are guilty of in this kind, than is commonly perceived. It is well that men would do that which God owneth if they knew it; but it is dangerous to say that he own-

eth what he abhorreth: to father falsehood on the God of truth, and sin on the God of holiness, is a fearful crime. God that would not endure false fire, (Lev. x.) or to be worshipped like an idol, no, nor to have holy things profaned, will much less endure to be made the father of lies and wickedness.

(1.) Consider that this is to set him against himself, who is the God of truth and holiness.

(2.) This is to use his name against his word, which is the word of truth and holiness.

(3.) This is to put him in the place of satan, and to fashion him the devil's works, who is a liar, and the father of it.

(4.) This is it which the false prophets are so heavily threatened for in Scripture.

(5.) This is to fight against God's kingdom, and the grace of Christ, and the work of the Spirit in his own name.

(6.) This is the direct breach of the third commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain:" a lie and vanity oft signify the same thing in Scripture. This sin is of the nature of perjury, which is appealing to God, as owning and approving a falsehood; and do not they so that falsely say, 'God saith this, and that, and the other thing in the Scripture, and by his Spirit in me,' which he never said, yea, which no one so much abhorreth as he; and will you father on God that one thing which he hateth? God tells you that he will not hold him guiltless, (that is, he will notably condemn and punish such) as thus profanely and audaciously take his name in vain, or use it to patronize a lie.

I am often near trembling, to hear some of our tremblers, yea, and some others, abuse abundance of plain texts of Scripture, and expound them with palpable falsehood, and deny the articles of the Christian faith, about Christ's person, his intercession, his coming again, his laws, his kingdom, his judgment, and pouring out many heathenish and gross errors, and fathering all this with raging confidence on God himself, and saying, 'I am sure this is true; the Spirit infallibly tells me so; God speaketh it in me; I no more doubt of it than whether I live; he that doubteth is damned; the light within me assureth me that this is true, and the meaning of the Scripture.' O patient God! O sinful man! O subtle serpent! O dark, unhappy world!

O pitiful professors of faith, that will be changed or sha-

ken by such heinous sin, as if they heard an oracle of God ! Our God is love, and yet he is a consuming fire : take heed what you say of him, and what you father on him : if pride, blindness and deceit do carry you to blaspheme him, your confidence will not make Christ justify it.

3. But I further advise you, If indeed it be truth and duty which men accuse you for, even such as Christ in the sacred Scriptures did prescribe, doubt not but he will justify you against all accusers ; and let this satisfy you, however you are slandered, against all. As, if your sins were few and small, there would be less use of a Saviour to forgive them ; so, if your slanders by malignant liars be few and small, you will have the less use for Christ to justify you. If it be “ all men that revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely (or lying) for Christ’s sake, blessed are ye,” saith Christ, Matt. v. 11. And if you believe him, you may “ rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is our reward in heaven ; and so persecuted they the prophets before you.” How many things are here to be observed ! It is supposed to be lies that are reported of you ; and this not of one sort only, but “ all manner of evil ;” as if you were impious against God, uncharitable and unjust towards men, heretics against truth, schismatics against unity, rebels and disobedient against authority, and all the rest : and of all these have the just been ordinarily accused ; and this is not by some one exasperated person in a corner, whom few believe, but by all men, that is, the common voice of deluded adversaries ; and it is not only belying, but reviling, yea, and persecuting ; yet must you not only be patient, but joyful and exceeding glad, because it is for Christ, and he will justify you, and give you a great reward in heaven. Here is a noble work for faith, to learn and practise this lesson of cross-bearing, hope and joy. The Judge is at the door, who seeth us and all our case, and is more concerned in it than we are : be not too hasty for a full vindication ; cannot you stay till the assizes ? Were it not that slanderers hurt others and themselves, how small a matter were their thoughts and words to you ? Will a malignant thought of a dying worm deject you from any real honour or felicity ? Is it in the power of a lying tongue, or of many, how high, or how credible soever esteemed, to deprive you of your innocency, or the approbation of God, or your adoption, or

Christ's justification, or your everlasting glory and reward? Do you trust Christ for your souls, and cannot you trust him with your names? Is God your God, and is not his approbation enough for you? Is man nothing to you, who is posting to dust and judgment, and yet cannot you bear his lying words or thoughts? How will you bear the cross of martyrdom, which is to die for well-doing, under the reputation of malefactors, if you cannot bear false words or thoughts? If you say, 'It is the truth that is dishonoured through my dishonour,' I answer,

(1.) God is sufficient to vindicate his truth: every slanderous mouth shall soon be stopped, and God will be proved true, and all men liars; Rom. iii.

(2.) And he hath promised to bring forth your righteousness as the light; your name shall rise as the morning sun, when the most malignant darkness seemed to bury them. Christ is not in heaven reputed a blasphemer, nor rebel against Cæsar; nor is Paul there taken for a pestilent fellow; nor the cross of Christ for foolishness or a stumblingblock, nor are true Christians there reproached or excommunicated, as heretics or evil-doers. Of how small regard is the judgment of man to him that fully trusteth to Christ's justification! Which you may be sure of so far as the Scriptures truly understood do justify you.

III. My next counsel is to those that are unresolved which cause or side is right, and to be chosen, whilst most men are accusers of each other: one talketh against this thing, and another against that, one against this doctrine and practice, and another against that, and so many parties accuse all the rest, that it distracteth ignorant persons.

Either the things which they differ about are such as Christ hath told us his mind of in the Scripture, or not; if not, then pity and bear with the contenders on both sides; interpose not your judgment rashly, but let every one enjoy his own: Paul and Barnabas, as well as Martha and Mary, may differ about persons and circumstances of duty; but if Christ have already decided the case, let that determine you: what need you more? Is the controversy whether God or man should be first obeyed? Whether heaven or earth, Christ or the pleasures of sin, should be preferred? Whether we should live after the flesh or the Spirit? In all such cases it is easy to know what Christ doth judge. I hope

you do not think that he will take part with the sensual, or the covetous, or the malignant enemies of a godly life; nor that he will turn to the oppressors or persecutors of the just; nor that he will renounce his own word, because any men, how great or reverend soever, misapply it, or contradict it; nor that he will call drunkenness, gluttony, worldliness, idleness, filthiness or pride, by gentle, extenuating, deceitful names, though the guilty and impenitent do so.

Some would persuade you that Christ and his Spirit could not speak so much sense as to become intelligible; and though every friend can intelligibly write you his mind, yet Christ could not, or would not; and that you may understand poets and orators, Virgil, Horace, Cicero, Seneca, and philosophers, lawyers, physicians, historians, yea, the voluminous statutes of lawgivers, and canons of the church; but the Holy Scriptures you cannot understand: but it is not reproaching Christ that is the way to have him justify your cause or you. Though ambiguity of words make Scripture, as all other writings, so far difficult as to need some skill in those words to him that will understand them; and though a carnal, blinded mind cannot (savingly in love and lively sense) receive the spiritual things of God, yet men shall shortly be convinced, that the Light of the world was not invisible, though the darkness comprehend it not, and that the wisdom of God hath spoken intelligibly, and in all necessary things you may certainly know which part Christ taketh.

But alas, Christ is unseen, and therefore little regarded by multitudes who customarily honour his name. As among the Turks, we blame not him that rather asketh what the emperor or bashaw commandeth, than what Mahomet commandeth; so these that honour Christ but as the Turks honour Mahomet, do far more regard which side their landlord takes, or which side such a lord, or bishop, or prince is for, than which part Christ is for. O sirs! you would all fain have Christ to be your advocate at last: as ever you would have him be for you then, be now for that which he is for, and hath foretold you he will justify.

O that you were all but truly willing to know what it is that Christ is for, (whether for a holy, or a worldly or fleshly mind and life); and that you were but resolved to be for that which Christ is for, as far as by diligent search you can

know it I should hope then that he would not leave you to damnable mistake, but help you to understand his will for your salvation.

Use. And here you may see, that it is false doctrine which some men confidently preach, that there is no such thing as Christ justifying his people against false accusations; as when we tell them, that against the accusation of being finally impenitent, unbelievers, unconverted, unholy, they must be justified by their own personal repentance, faith, conversion and holiness, or not at all; they have no shift against the plain truth, but to tell us, that we have need of no such justification: the devil will have something else to do than falsely to accuse us. But on the contrary,

1. Is not the devil the accuser of the brethren? And is he not the father of lies? Is not his name Diabolus, a false accuser?

2. Doth he not set the wicked on his work in this life falsely to accuse the faithful, and their faith and duty, that it may reflect on God himself? Yea, through the remnant of ignorance and sin, Christ's servants too oft falsely accuse one another, as unsound, erroneous, heretical, &c. Yea, darkness causeth good men's consciences too often falsely to accuse themselves. And is it not Christ's office to be the advocate of the just? And in justifying them to justify himself, and his cause and truth? Rom. iii. 4. 26. And is it not much of the work of that glorious day, to bring all hidden things to light, and to justify his cause and servants against all the false accusations that ever were brought against them, and thus to shame all falsehood and unrighteousness, and to judge the world in truth?

3. Was it not a false accusation that satan brought against Job; and did not God very solemnly justify him against it? Is not satan's kingdom upheld in the world, by making men in all nations believe that believers are deceived, false believers, and that Christ's servants are wicked hypocrites, the plagues and troubles of the earth? And is there not a day to justify them against all this?

4. If we are not justified against false accusation, we are justified against none at all; for Christ will not justify us against the truth. It is justification by plea and sentence that we are now speaking of: justification sometimes signifieth making us just, and sometimes judging and maintain-

ing us to be just. The first doth make an unrighteous and ungodly man just, by converting him, and giving him repentance toward God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ; and pardoning his sins, and giving him right to the heavenly inheritance: this is our first constitutive justification. But when God hath thus made us just by the merits of Christ's righteousness,

1. He virtually by the law of grace doth pronounce us just, and this against the curse of the condemning law of innocency.

2. And in judgment Christ as our advocate will maintain us just.

3. And Christ our Judge will judge us just, against all that can be brought against us: but how far just? Not such as never sinned; nor such as by imputation of his righteousness are by God accounted never to have sinned, nor such as never deserved death: but such as are not to be condemned to pain of sense or loss, but have right to the free gift of life eternal, because Christ for them satisfied justice, and fulfilled all righteousness, and merited all this for them, even forgiveness, grace and glory, and they being penitent believers have part in him, and sincerely obeyed him to the death.

And if it were never so true, that no actual false accusation would be urged against believers, yet is it true that we shall be justified against even a virtual and possible accusation: and where there is not so much as this, there needeth no justification by plea, by witness, or by sentence.

And if we are accused to have been sinners, it is not to be denied; if it be said that our sin deserved death, it must be granted: but if it be said,

1. That we were finally impenitent unbelievers.

2. Or have no part in Christ.

3. Or had no pardon of sin.

4. Or had no right to life eternal.

5. And therefore are to be condemned; all this being false, Christ will justify us against it, and against all other false accusation of men or devils.

Doct. Last. 'Christ doth not only plead his own righteousness for Mary's justification, but justify her choice of the better part, and decree that it shall not be taken from her.'

I. Indeed all the good that we have is his own as the Gi-

ver, though some be also ours as the actors and possessors : and Christ will justify all that is of himself. Nothing but good cometh from infinite good, or him that came to destroy the works of the devil. They that accuse our grace or duty, accuse Christ, his Spirit, and his law. And will he not justify himself? (But of this before.)

II. He that praiseth his servants' holiness and duty, and will praise them in judgment, doth so far justify them. "Well done, good and faithful servant!" Matt. xxv. Yea, he that calleth eternal glory their reward, and the crown of righteousness given by God the Righteous Judge, to such as have fought a good fight, and finished their course, and love the appearing of Christ; and he that is the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him; and will judge all men according to their works, and pronounceth them blessed that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life (2 Tim. iv. 8, 9. Heb. v. 9. Rev. xxii. 14. &c.), doth surely so far justify this personal obedience and righteousness of theirs.

But he justifieth only against false accusations, and not against the charge of culpable imperfection. And do they therefore talk wisely that say, it is no righteousness and no justification, because it is imperfect? Doth any wise man pretend to personal perfect righteousness? And doth not God many hundred times in Scripture call that righteousness and equivalent which is imperfect? And will he justify or save any that hath no such righteousness? Christ was perfectly righteous for us to merit the pardon and salvation of believers, and the acceptance of their imperfect righteousness; and not to bring any to heaven that hath no inherent personal righteousness.

There are some that seem by their arguing to think that so much honour as we give to our holiness and duty, so much we take from Christ, and to praise his saints is to dishonour him. (And yet these men love and look for praise.) But wise men will not believe that the greatness of the gift is a dishonour to the giver, or the excellency of the house or work a dishonour to the builder or workman, or the recovered health of the patient a dishonour to the physician; else what a dishonour will our salvation be to Christ, when we are perfectly holy, without spot or wrinkle, and have no sin! It will be then by the communication of his holi-

ness, as motion, light, and heat is from the sun; and so it is now, though we are imperfect: God accepteth, praiseth, and 'in tantum' proportionably justifieth our imperfect righteousness for the sake and merits of his that was perfect.

I never met with any of this mind, but if one accuse them of less than infidelity, impenitence, impiety, and hypocrisy, they will seek to justify themselves. And why will they justify themselves in that which God will not justify the generation of the just, when malignants call them all deluded hypocrites? And I know no sober man but expecteth that every judge should justify the wrongfully accused and their cause.

Object. 'To justify a good cause is not to justify the person.'

Answ. Untrue. It is not to justify him in all respects, but it is to justify him as to that cause.

Object. 'This is but before men.'

Answ. God doth more hate the condemning of the just than any man doth.

Object. 'This is but as to a particular cause, and not an universal justification.'

Answ. And the justifying of a believer and penitent obedient saint by his faith, and repentance, and obedience, is but the justifying him in that particular cause, which is the medium of his part in Christ; the merit of whose righteousness and sacrifice procureth the pardon of all his sins, and his right to the free gift of life eternally, and so far justifieth him against the guilt of his sin, and the condemnation of the law.

He that is not first made a penitent believer, and justified against chargeable infidelity, impenitence, and hypocrisy, shall never be justified by Christ's merits and sentence against the curse and penalty of the law.

II. 'But Christ doth not only justify Mary and her choice, but decree that it shall not be taken from her.' For,

1. He hath by his covenant given the best and greatest things, and that for ever to every one that will but thankfully accept and choose them.

2. And what he offereth and promiseth he decreeth.

3. And what he decreeth and promiseth he performeth.

For who is it that should take it from her, or from any believer? Or "who shall separate us from the love of God?"

1. Not the malice of satan ; else no believer should be saved. If the devil could deprive us of the Gospel, or of grace, it should be surely done ; if he could have kept the world from being redeemed by Christ, it had never been redeemed ; if he could keep men unconvinced, unconverted, and unpardoned, he would surely do it.

2. Not any of his malignant instruments ; for God will not give them power to make a godly man ungodly, and the devil hath no such power to give them.

3. Not the envy of erroneous zealots, or uncharitable hypocrites. The prodigal shall not be turned out of doors because his elder brother envieth his entertainment. The envy of the Jews shall not hinder the blessing of the Gentiles. Resolvedly choose the best, and you shall have it.

Use 1. O that all men would take this sure and necessary direction of Christ for the choice of their comforts, hopes, and happiness. All men had rather be happy for ever, than for a little while ; and what else but holiness and heaven, Christ, grace, and glory, will be such a durable felicity ? Will you choose the favour of great men, and hopes of preferment and worldly honours ; and can you say that this shall not be taken from you ? Will you choose lands and money, and the prospering of your endeavours in growing rich ; and can you say that these shall not be taken from you ? Will you choose mirth and sport, and fleshly lust, and the pleasing of your appetites and fancies ; and can you say that these shall not be taken from you ? Must not life itself be shortly taken from you, and therefore all the pleasures of this life ? If these things be your choice, Christ hath already foretold you what you may expect ; “ Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee, and then whose shall all these things be which thou hast provided ? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God ;” Luke xii. 19, 20. And Luke xvi. 25. “ Son remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus evil things, but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.” “ Wherefore then do you spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not ? Hearken diligently to Christ, and eat that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto him ; hear, and your

soul shall live; and he will make an everlasting covenant of sure mercies with you :” Isa. lv. 2, 3. “ Labour not for the food which perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life,” which Christ will give you ; John vi. 27. “ Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal ; but lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust do corrupt, nor thieves break through or steal ;” Matt. vi. 19, 20. “ The time is short, therefore weep and rejoice, buy and possess, and use the world, as though you did it not ; for the fashion of this world passeth away ;” 1 Cor. vii. 29—31. O be not as the wicked, who have their portion in this life, in the treasure of their bellies ; “ for their hopes soon perish as the rush that groweth but in the mire, and as the spider’s web, and as the giving up of the ghost ;” Psal. xvii. 14. Flesh will fail you, and the world will fail you ; but God will be a never-failing portion to all that do but sincerely choose him ; Psal. lxxiii. 25, 26. If you drink here you shall thirst again, and if you eat here, you shall hunger again ; but if Christ and his Spirit be your meat and drink, “ you shall hunger and thirst no more for ever.” Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.” O do not profanely sell such a birthright for a morsel ; you shall have no better than you choose ; shew not yourselves unworthy of eternal life, by preferring known vanity before it. If you lost heaven because you could not have it, and would have a Christ and holiness, but could not, your case would not be all so bad, as to be the wilful refusers of your own salvation, and lose it because you would not have it. Do not say, We would be saved, if you would not be saved from your sin, and have that holiness and communion with God which is your salvation ; and do not say, we would have God, and Christ, and holiness, if the pleasures of sin seem better to you, and you choose them first ! You may as well say plainly, We will have no God, no Christ, no heaven, as say, We had rather have the pleasures of sin ; and you may as well say so, as choose so, and do so. There are some deceived libertines that think that every good desire is the mark of a justified soul, especially if it be accompanied with a willingness that Christ’s righteousness should justify them, and a belief that

it will do so, though they love sinful pleasure, profit and honour, better than God, and holiness, and heaven, and had rather have a felicity of an epicure, than of a saint.

But Christ himself hath judged contrarily. He saith, "He cannot be his disciple that loveth any thing more than him;" Matt. x. Luke xiv. 23. 26. And he that will have this pearl of greatest price, must think nothing too dear, but sell all that he hath to buy it; Matt. xiii. 46. To be "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God," is the brand of the worst times and persons; 2 Tim. iii. 4. Let any man that can shew us one promise of God for the saving of any that seek not first God's kingdom and its righteousness; (Matt. vi. 33.) and labour not chiefly for the food that perisheth not; and loveth not God above the world, and holiness more than the pleasures of sin.

If this be not so, where can you fix the difference between the justified and them that perish? Would God make such a difference in the world to come, if there were none here? Doth Christ and his Spirit do no more noble a work in sanctifying souls than so? If one may be justified that loveth one sinful pleasure better than God, and grace, and glory, why not he that loveth another, and another, and all? If fornication, why not gluttony? If gluttony, why not drunkenness? If drunkenness, why not covetousness, and ambition, and all evil? But Paul saith, "Let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things cometh the wrath of God on the children of disobedience;" Eph. v. 6. And "without holiness no man shall see the Lord;" Heb. xii. 14. "Not every one that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into heaven;" no, not those believers that prophesied, and did wonders, and cast out devils in Christ's name; but only they that do the will of God. To the rest he will say, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, I know you not."

How oft is it said that all shall be judged according to their works? And Christ so describeth his own judgment, Matt. xxv. Can any man believe James ii., 1 John iii. iv., Rom. viii. 1—14., Rom. ii., and a multitude of such texts, and yet believe that a bare belief that Christ's righteousness is imputed to us, will prove any one justified who loveth his sin better than God, grace, and glory; and consequently that Christ's members differ but imputatively from the chil-

dren of the devil? For wherein is a wicked man worse than the godly, but in this? "He that loveth the world (more than God) the love of the Father is not in him! Why, may not life or pleasure separate us from the love of God if we love them better? Rom. viii. 38, 39. Nay, he loveth not God at all in a proper sense, who loveth him not as God; and he loveth him not at all as God, who loveth him not as better than the pleasure of sin, but only as a lesser good.

Object. 'To love God above all sinful pleasure is the fruit and ripeness of grace, but the seed doth not reach so high.'

Answ. It is true, if you call preparatory grace that seed; but such are in no justified state; but it is not true if you mean by the seed any thing proper to a justified man, as all the texts forecited shew.

Object. 'What can the strongest Christian do more than love God above all?'

Answ. Among those that love God above all, and holiness more than sin, there may be a hundred different degrees; one may love him so much as to long after him, and delight in him, and condemn all vanities, and overcome temptations much more easily and effectually than others; and another may do these more faintly, hardly, and with less delight.

Object. 'Did David, Peter, and the disciples that all forsook Christ and fled, love him better than life at such a time?'

Answ. 1. We must distinguish between the rational will, or love, and sensitive passion. 2. Between the habit and the act. 3. Between the ordinary course of action, and a particular extraordinary action.

The weakest true justified Christian loveth God above the creature, and perfect holiness above sinful pleasure.

1. As to the fixed inclination and habit of the soul, (which is the Divine nature.)

2. And in the ordinary act or exercise of his rational love, and deliberate choice, and the seeking endeavour of his life.

3. But not always with the most passionate sensitive love.

4. And passion (of fear or creature love) may in an extraordinary act both weaken the activity of rational, spiritual love, and bear down the executive power into outward contrary sinful acts. But the predominancy of the holy nature will shew itself, in raising the soul from such a fall, and causing it the more to hate and fear the sin. There is difference between a swoon and death, and between an infant

and an image : and so there was between the falls of David, Lot, Peter, and a wicked man, that had rather keep his sin than leave it, and loveth such pleasure more than God.

Use 2. Be thankful then, Christians, for that grace of Christ which caused you to make the wisest choice ; even of that which is the real durable felicity, and shall never be taken from you.

Had you chosen houses, they might have been burnt : had you chosen wealth or worldly honours, they might all have been taken from you ; yea, all would certainly have left you in distress. Men might have taken away your estates, your liberties, your lives, but not your God, your Christ, your heaven. They may take away your Bibles, and other books, but they cannot take away your grace, They may shut you out of the synagogues, but not out of the love of God. They may imprison you, banish you, cut out your tongues, that you can neither preach nor speak, but still your souls may have communion with God. A Tertullus may call us pestilent fellows and seditious : schismatics may call us the schismatics ; and heretics may call us the heretics, and hypocrites may call us hypocrites ; but none of them can make us what they call us. They may with some (by God's permission) take away the reputation of your innocency, but not your innocency itself. When a man's food is but on his table, it may be taken from him ; if it be but in his stomach he may cast it up : but it is safer when it is digested and turned into his substance. So may your teachers, and Bibles, and churches, be taken from you, but not the law and Gospel which is written in your hearts, and become a spiritual nature in you. What triumphant challenges doth St. Paul make ? " Who shall be against us ? Who shall condemn us ? What shall separate us from the love of God ? " Rom. viii. 37, 38, &c. The power of men and devils cannot do it. Death itself the last enemy shall not do it. He will dissolve this frame, and lay our flesh in dust and darkness, and take away from us all the pleasure and possession of this world, but none of our chief good. Tyrants may deprive us of such things as they choose themselves, but not of that which we have chosen ! If the devil had said truly, (Matt. iv. Luke iii. 6, 7.) " All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them, for that is delivered to me, and to whom I will I give it ; " he might have said also,

From whom I will I take it away. But sure he is no giver of grace or glory, and therefore cannot forcibly take them from us. Nay, by taking life and all from us, men shall but hasten our perfect fruition of what we choose. Malice may snarl, and rail, and slander, but cannot abate the love of the Father, the grace of the Son, the communion of the Spirit, or deprive us of expected glory.

Let not then worldly fury think that it hath undone us by taking away worldly things. They were none of our choice, nor our trust, nor treasure. If we are true believers, our treasure, heart and conversation are in heaven : let thieves get in and steal it thence if they can. Papal usurpers may pretend Peter's keys to shut out all that obey not their domination ; but while God is our choice, and we shut not out ourselves from heaven, they talk more to their own hurt than ours, and can never take our chosen treasure from us.

Use 3. But if none can take it from us, let us not cast it away ourselves. All that men and devils can do against us is but by allurements, or fear, or other temptations, to deceive us into self-destruction, and to cast away that ourselves which none can take from us. Great disputes we have about free-will and perseverance ; whether it be possible to fall away. But it is past dispute with men that believe the word of God, that we have such freedom, as that Christ, and grace, and glory, are freely offered to our accepting choice ; and that he that truly chooseth them shall have them ; and that all that choose them not before that pleasure of sin which is set in competition against them, shall never have them ; and that it is just so far possible or impossible to fall from grace, as it is possible or impossible for the will of one that hath grace to change : so far as your serious choice continueth, you persevere ; and so far as you change it, you lose your grace. While you plead for the impossibility of the ill changing of your wills, confute not yourselves by your actual change ; but when you feel them again pleased with the forbidden things of the flesh and world, and your appetite to holy pleasure groweth dull and cold, methinks you should perceive that in yourselves there is no impossibility of a change : if there be any, it is out of you, in God ; and no doubt but a change of his decree and will is impossible. All the doubt is, whether he have decreed that no gracious will shall change. It is certain that being so very mutable

in ourselves, that we could not persevere were we left to ourselves, we are all under many and great obligations to “keep ourselves in the love of God;” Jude 21. and to “continue in the love of Christ;” John xv. 9. And we have need of commands to “abide in Christ, and he in us;” John xv. 4. And need of threatenings of destruction if we fall away. “If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned;” John xv. 6. “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall;” 1 Cor. x. 12. “Let us fear lest a promise being left of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it;” Heb. iv. 1. And all God’s threatenings are the objects of our belief and fear. “If we sin wilfully after the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which devoureth the adversaries: of how much sorer punishment suppose ye shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and done despite to the Spirit of grace.— If any draw back my soul shall have no pleasure in him;” Heb. x. 26, 27. 29. 38. Which is the same with Ezek. xxxiii. 18. “When the righteous turneth from his righteousness he shall die,” and xxviii. 24.

Yea, God seeth it meet to give us the comforts of the faithful still conditionally, Rev. ii. iii. “To him that overcometh,” &c. “He that endureth to the end shall be saved;” Col. i. 21—23. “If ye continue in the faith, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel.”

All this tells us, that notwithstanding God’s unchangeable decree, the care and diligent labour to persevere is our duty, and that falling away must be our fear, and that there is no such impossibility as excludeth this care and fear: and that so far as it is impossible to fall away, so far it is impossible not to fear falling away, with a preserving, watchful fear: and how far a known impossibility is the object of due fear I leave to further consideration.

God hath put us into the hands of Christ, in whose care and trust is our chief security; but he hath also trusted us or put our perseverance and salvation more in our own hands than in any others; and so far that if we do not undo

ourselves by wilful and final neglect or refusal of offered grace and mercy we are safe. Choose Christ as Christ, and God as God; choose grace and glory before all the vanities of the world, and before all the pleasures of sin for a season, and stand to this choice unto the end, expressing it in faithful victorious endeavours, and then neither men nor devils, life or death, shall take your chosen treasure from you.

Object. 'I can easily keep up a resolved choice of God, and holiness, and heaven; but I cannot so constantly keep up the rejection of fleshly pleasures, and profit, and honour, which would be for the time preferred.'

Ans. The worst man would have God and heaven so far as to give him the desires of his flesh, and keep him from all pain and misery; but is it not a plain contradiction to say in proper speech, 'I would have God as God, that is, as best, but I would have pleasant vanity as better? I can easily love my wife as a wife, but I cannot forbear loving harlots better. I can resolve for temperance, but I cannot resolve against gluttony and drunkenness. I am resolved for truth, but not against lying?' Just such is that, to resolve for God and holiness, but not against the pleasures of sin, which alienate the heart from God.

Object. 'But how doth a man choose God and holiness in the hour of his sin, when he is choosing forbidden pleasure?'

Ans. The act of sin is not a choosing God and holiness, but somewhat that is contrary; but every act of the will which is against God and holiness is not a rejecting of them, or a retracting of our choice, nor inconsistent with it; but perhaps only an interruption of the exercise, and an abatement of the degree. Play-fellows may draw a child to disobey a father for love of play, and them, when yet he doth not forsake his father, nor love them better; but only forgets him, or abateth desire through the diversion of the sport.

Quest. 'What is it that is our duty in order to the unchangeableness of our own wills and choice?'

Ans. 1. Trust not yourselves too far: the will goeth not against the mind's apprehensions; and a man's mind is a very dark, weak, mutable thing: what a temptation, or a subtle wrangler or argument, or a new thought may do upon us, we do not well know. Presumption seldom escapeth danger. A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: con-

fidence in your own understanding, goodness and stability, is the prognostic of backsliding.

2. Away from the temptations which do most strongly allure the flesh : to be overpleased with things temporal and sensible, turneth the heart from things spiritual and eternal. To desire a more pleasing condition to the flesh, is to desire stronger temptations, and greater danger to the soul.

3. Think much and seriously on the great and certain things which first converted and resolved your wills : they are the same, and as good now as they were then, and you should know them better. A man that loveth and chooseth rationally, knoweth why he doth it : and the fixing and renewing of your knowledge and belief, is it that must fix your love and choice. The greatest things forgotten do not affect us.

4. Flatter not yourselves with the hope of living long on earth, and look not at death and the following life as a great way off. The power of tempting vanities lieth in men's hopes of long enjoying them : to a man under the sentence of present death they have little power. And the best things that seem far off, do not much and powerfully affect us. Live therefore as dying men, and you will have the mind and choice of dying men.

5. See that your meditations and belief be practical, and brought close to the heart : and take not bare thinking of God and heaven as enough, but know that holy thoughts fall short of their use and end, if they come not to the heart and life. It is not the speculative disputing Christian that hath the fixed will and choice, unless he be also a hearty practising, experienced Christian. He that hath a heavenly heart and conversation, and hath felt the power and sweetness of things spiritual, will hold them fast, when bare hearsay and opinion will let them go.

6. Depend in the constant exercise of faith and prayer upon the love of the Father, the grace of the Son, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, and seek to please God as your greatest pleasure, and so live by the faith of the Son of God, that you may say, "it is Christ that liveth in you;" Gal. ii. 19, 20. And then none can take you out of his hands, nor separate you from the love of God, (Rom. viii. 38, 39.) nor take your chosen portion from you.

In a word, that your choice may be unchangeable, you must firmly trust to the unchangeable promise of the unchangeable God, for the unchangeable kingdom, as purchased by Christ, and our title sealed by his Spirit. The world and the flesh must be crucified, dead and buried to you by the virtue of his cross believed, and you must be risen with him to a heavenly mind, and hope, and conversation: every weight must be laid by, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, (Heb. xii. 1.); and we must not look back to the forsaken world behind us, but press forward for the prize unto the mark (Phil. iii.), looking still to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, and despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. We must consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners, lest we be weary and faint. We must count nothing dear to us that we may finish our course with joy; and must know by faith that "our labour is not in vain in the Lord," if we would be "stedfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord;" 1 Cor. xv. 58. We must serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear, as for a kingdom which cannot be moved; and all this in dependance on the grace of Christ; Heb. xii. 28. Considerate men know by grace and experience that this world is vanity and vexation: if we know also by a living constant faith, that a better world of holy joy is the near and certain portion of the faithful, it will fix the will in a resolved choice, and we shall not be like profane Esau, that sold his birthright for one morsel; and the living eternal God will be eternally our Life and Joy, to whom all the blessed with Christ shall give glory and praise for ever. Amen.

CAIN AND ABEL MALIGNITY,

THAT IS

ENMITY TO SERIOUS GODLINESS ;

THAT IS,

TO A HOLY AND HEAVENLY STATE OF HEART AND LIFE :

**LAMENTED, DESCRIBED, DETECTED, AND UNANSWERABLY PROV-
ED TO BE THE DEVILISH NATURE, AND THE MILITIA OF THE
DEVIL AGAINST GOD, AND CHRIST, AND THE CHURCH AND
KINGDOMS, AND THE SUREST SIGN OF A STATE OF
DAMNATION.**

THURSDAY 1892 DEC 11/27

WEDNESDAY 1892 DEC 11/26

TUESDAY 1892 DEC 11/25

MONDAY 1892 DEC 11/24

SUNDAY 1892 DEC 11/23

SATURDAY 1892 DEC 11/22

FRIDAY 1892 DEC 11/21

TO THE READER.

READER,

THIS reprehensive lamentation of English malignity, or hatred, and scorn, and persecution of serious godliness, by them who profess to believe in God, and to be Christians, was written in prison (but without any provoking sense of my suffering), in Anno 1685, or 1686. And by one that was not wholly ignorant, how much of the Papists' counsel and power was causal in our change since the return of King Charles II. 1660. And therefore it grateth so much upon the Papists, though they were professed Protestants who were the open agents.

It was written by one who can remember, at least since 1627. That the serious practice of godliness was the common scorn of the vulgar rabble; and he that did but read the Scripture, and books of piety, and pray in his family, and catechise children or servants, to hear a sermon at the next parish church from a godly Conformist, when he had none at home; yea, that did but seriously talk of Christ or Scripture, or the life to come, or preparation for death and judgment, when under the name of a Puritan, which was a reproach in the mouth of drunkards, swearers, fornicators, and all the sensual, worldly sort, both high and low. And that conformable ministers (yea and gentlemen) that were but seriously religious, no more escaped this scorn than Nonconformists (who were then so few, that they were in most places unknown). He sadly remembereth how greatly this malignant rabble triumphed in the bishop's visitation articles, and in the preaching and talk of many priests, who sharpened their sermons with invectives against Puritans as

dangerous hypocrites, though they had not a Nonconformist within many miles. He heard the godly conformable ministers lament, that the bishops and ecclesiastical courts by their jealousy and heat against the nonconformable Puritans, became the strength and encouragement of this malignant, vicious rabble; and that the young worldly ministers took it for the way to preferment, to preach against Puritans, while they treated the multitude of profane, prayerless families that had no savour of serious religion, as their good and peaceable flocks. He lived to see the godly, learned conformists, so grieved for this, that they longed for a reformation; and many conformists (as Bishop Robert Abbot, Bishop Downname, and divers others published their reproof and lamentation for it: and good Robert Bolton (in his Directions for Walking with God) thinks that since malice entered into the heart of man, there was never a word tossed with more malice in the mouths of drunkards and profane men, than the word 'Puritan.' Hundreds and thousands of these wicked scorers of religion, were either admitted (or driven) to the sacrament, or lived quietly in great parishes while they despised it, while these poor Puritans were strictly hunted after! And if they fasted and prayed with a dying or sick friend, without getting a licence for it from the bishop, the churchwarden must enter them into their inquisition, or be forsworn.

These Puritans having the greatest averseness to popery, in some things were too suspicious of all that they thought smelled of it. And when they heard that in Ireland the Papists had most barbarously murdered the Protestants (two hundred thousand), and that they boasted that they rose by the king's commission, and threatened to invade England, and that the English Papists were against the parliament; this made many think that the Protestant religion was not safe, but in the parliament's part and care: upon which the next year when our odious civil war began, many of them went into the parliament's armies; but the generality would fain have lived quietly at home, but the debauched rabble and their patrons would not suffer them; but they turned the name 'Puritan' into 'Roundhead,' and 'Down with the Roundheads,' was the common cry. I have myself by that cry been in present danger, in passing through a city where

no man knew me, because I wore not long hair. If their neighbours did but pray, and sing a psalm in their houses, the rabble would (like the Sodomites at the door of Lot) set up a cry against them in the streets, and say, ‘Down with the Roundheads, the rebels, a Gowry, a conspiracy, &c.’ Even where I lived they assembled with weapons, and sought my life, and knocked down (mortality being the issue) even strangers in the streets that meddled not with them, because they were accounted friends to the Puritans. By this means the parliament’s garrisons and armies were filled with religious men, that were forced to fly from their houses by the malignant, ignorant drunkards, to save their lives : and this, even this was the ruin of King Charles, and his army, and of the persecuting bishops and clergy. Necessity made thousands to be soldiers that could not live at home : and most were moved by an argument that was not cogent, still saying, ‘We cannot believe that God would suffer the generality of the most religious to choose the wrong side, and the generality of the Papists and ignorant drunkards and malignants to be in the right.’

O what shame and pity is it that the Antipuritan clergy no better remembered from 1660 till now, by what means they fell ; and that they no more understood, nor yet understand, what a torrent of sin, of danger, and of shame, is come upon them, by their strengthening themselves, by sheltering (to say no worse) the sensual, irreligious, malignant rabble, (rich and poor,) that they may tread down the Puritans, that by their own doings are brought into a dislike of them. Will God ever bless a profane rabble (or gentry) to be the honour and strength of the church, against the religious that desire a reformation ?

It is not their new foolish names and scorns, (as Whigs, Trimmers, Presbyterians, &c.) that will prove that it is not serious piety that they hate. As long as the most filthy wicked livers are the enemies and accusers, and in their own party and companions, the vilest debauchery passeth for sufferable, and a small disgrace, and thousands of such live at ease, when preaching the Gospel, and praying without their fetters or book, must cost men ruin, and imprisonment, and scorn. And Sulpicius Severus’s sharp invective against Ithacius, Idacius, and the rest of the bishops in their synod

was that in prosecuting the Priscillian Gnostics, they brought the matter to that pass, that if godly men did but fast, and pray, and read Scripture, the bishops made them suspected as Priscillianists (even St. Martin himself). Woe to them that turn the sacred offices of magistracy and ministry against God that did ordain them, to be used as in his name, and in some representation of himself, sacrilegiously blaspheming him as an enemy to himself. Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with God, that frameth mischief by a law, to make sin common and allowed?

By this the reader may see that there is a double history needful to the full understanding of this book; and of the nature and causes of malignity; that is, 1. The history of Adam's fall, and the great depravation of human nature thence arising; and the true meaning of the enmity thence put between the woman's and the serpent's seed, exemplified in the two first brothers born into the world; as also in Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob; and frequently mentioned by Christ and his apostles.

2. The history of the advantages that malignity hath got into England since the Reformation; and especially since the return of Charles the Second. This must contain the sad differences begun at Frankfort in Queen Mary's days; the errors and extremes of both the differing parties; the biasing determinations of Queen Elizabeth; the difference between the first bishops that had been exiles, and their successors; the Presbyterians' provocations by over-opposing Episcopacy, and the bishops' design to root them out; and the making of canons to that end; the rise of a new sort of bishops, began in Laud, Neil, Howson, Corbet, and Buckeridge, with Mountague, and their growth under Buckingham against the old churchmen; the design of a coalition with Rome, and the French and English attempts thereto; the interruption of this design by the Long Parliament, and the wars; the Scots forcing the parliament (that in their straits asked their help) to take their covenant; the imposing that covenant on the whole ministry, and making it a divided engine on pretence of unity; the parliament's casting out with a multitude of flagitious ministers) some doctors, for being against them, for the king, contrary to the desires of the peacemakers; the Presbyterians under Monk restoring King

Charles the Second; the return and preferment of his doctors, and their revengeful resolutions; their design to let all church-power, and preferment, and academic rule into the hands of them that most hated Puritans, or would endeavour their extirpation, and would educate youth in bitter prejudice and hatred of them; the vulgar hatred of serious godliness in Conformists and Nonconformists, under the name of Puritans; the power that a few returned doctors had with the king and chancellor in the disposal of preferments, and thereby to overrule the parliament, and to procure the acts of uniformity, corporation oaths, vestry and militia oaths, and the acts for banishments, confinements, imprisonments, fining, ejecting, silencing and ruining such whose consciences pleaded God's law and authority against any of their oaths, impositions, and silencing prohibitions to preach the Gospel; the great difference in the wars (I meddle not with the cause) between the adherents and soldiers of the king, (Charles I.) and the parliament's in point of piety and sobriety; the animosity and implacable heat by which the before-conquered, and now ruling party, proceeded towards the ruin of those that they took for enemies to the cause, civil or ecclesiastic, which they had owned; the unhappiness of the then present ministry, that being young then, had never meddled with wars, that they must equally suffer as enemies, for fearing the imposed oaths, subscriptions, covenants, and practices; the rejoicing of the common sort of the luxurious drunkards, whoremongers, and infidels, that they had got so many of the religious into contempt, and scorn, and ruin; the woeful increase of whoredom, luxury, and impiety, and Sadduceeism hereupon; the great numbers of religious people, who before hoped for peace and a pious prelacy, that fell hereupon into a hatred of prelacy, and a great disesteem of the conforming ministry; and so our divisions are grown to a fixed factious enmity; and malice and worldly interest will hear no motions or petitions for peace; and yet madly plead all for love and peace, while they implacably fight against them, and accuse those as the enemies of peace, who beg peace of them, and cannot obtain it.

This is the sum of the doleful history which this book presupposeth: but should I write it, the rage would be increased. The foregoing narrative is as much as is fit for

this brief discourse, which, if you will, you may style ‘Acris correptio,’ with Gildas ; or ‘Planctus Ecclesiæ,’ with Alv. Pelag. or, ‘The groans of the church,’ with a late conformable divine. It hath been cast by four years, at first because it would not be endured, and after in a vain hope that our church reformation would make such a complaint less necessary. But now I perceive the devil will be the devil, and mankind will be born blind, sensual and malignant, till there be a new heaven and earth in which dwelleth righteousness. Come, Lord Jesus.

August 24, 1689, the fatal day of silencing in England in 1662.

CAIN AND ABEL MALIGNITY.

CHAPTER I.

*A Lamentation for the Case of the Deluded, Malignant,
Militant World.*

1. **T**HE depraved and miserable condition of mankind, hath long been the astonishing wonder of the sober and inquisitive part of the world : philosophers were puzzled with the difficult questions, whence it first came ; and why it is no more remedied. Christians are taught by the sacred Scriptures how to answer both, by laying it on man's misusing of his freewill, supposing God's permission of his trial and temptations ; and on his resistance and rejection of remedying grace, in the degree that it is vouchsafed or offered. But still there are difficulties, and our understandings are dark, and hardly satisfied. And whencesoever it comes, the case is doleful, and we cannot but think of it with astonishment and lamentation. When we saw a hundred thousand made dead corpses by the London plague, 1665, it did not take off the terror to know how it begun. And when we saw the city on a dreadful flame, which none could stop, it cured not the general astonishment to conjecture how it was kindled or carried on : no doubt but hell itself proclaimeth that God is holy, wise and just, and devils and men are the cause of their own everlasting punishment. But yet if we had a sight of it, amazement and dread would overwhelm us, And, alas ! what a map of hell is the greatest part of earth ! Hell is a place of lying, malignant and murderous, hurtful spirits, miserable by and for their wickedness : and is not this in a low degree, a true description of most of the earth ?

2. Nineteen parts in thirty of the earth are idolaters and heathens. And do I need to say, how ignorant, wicked and miserable they are? Many of them publicly worship the devil, as witches do with us; and he deludeth them, and appeareth in divers shapes to them, and ruleth them as he doth witches. And those that are more civil, are strangers or enemies to Christ. Six parts of the thirty are ignorant Mahometans, destroyers indeed of heathenish idolatry, and such as take Christ for a great and true prophet, but know him not as a Saviour, but equal to prefer a gross deceiver, and live under barbarous tyrants, who by violence keep them in the dark. The other five parts that are called Christians, alas! consist most of people bred up in lamentable ignorance, mostly barbarous or debased by the oppression of tyrants, such as the Muscovites, most of the Greeks, the Abassines, Armenians, and many eastern sects and nations. What ignorance the vulgar Papists are bred in in Italy, Spain, Germany, Poland, France, and other countries, and what enmity to true reformation prevaieth in princes, priests, and people; and by what lying and cruelty they fight against truth, and what inquisitions, murders, and inhuman massacres have been their powerful means, I need not use many words to tell.

And are the Protestant reformed churches free from fleshly, worldly, wicked men? From ignorant, malignant, cruel enemies to truth, and piety, and peace?

3. Our king's dominions are the best and happiest nations on earth. Here is most knowledge of the truth, and most proportionably that truly love it, and live in a holy obedience thereto, and fain would live a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness, honesty, and sobriety. But alas! they must be contented with their own personal uprightness and reward, and the peace of their consciences in God's acceptance. But with men there seemeth to be no hopes of common wisdom, piety, love, and peace.

We are all baptized with one baptism; we all profess to be the servants of one God, and the faithful followers of one Christ, and to believe in one holy, sanctifying Spirit, and to believe the same canonical Scriptures as the word of God, indited by that Spirit; and to be of one holy catholic church, which is all the members of Christ on earth; and to hold the communion of saints. We mostly in England and Scotland

agree in the Protestant reformed doctrine, and sacraments ; our concord in profession is so great, that if some men had not devised some oaths, professions, covenants, practices, knacks, and engines of their own (which they dare not say God made) to become the matter of unavoidable dissent, they could hardly have known how to pretend any difference in religion among us, and hell would scarce have found any cloak for malicious accusations, enmity and discord.

You shall scarce meet with a man that will not speak well of love and peace, and say that we must love God above all, and our neighbours as ourselves, and do as we would have others do to us. And yet is there any enmity or disagreement ? Alas how great, and how incurable !

4. Who would think that knew us not by our profession, but only by our actions, but that the three kingdoms consisted of the most deadly enemies to each other ? Of Turks and Christians ; of wolves and sheep ; that I say not of devils and men ? Yea, Turks and Christians can live together in Hungary and all the eastern countries. Orthodox and heretics can live together in Poland, Helvetia, Holland, &c. But Protestants and Protestants cannot live together in Britain. Cities and corporations, countries and churches, if not families also, are distracted in enmity and more than mental feuds and war. Guelphs and Gibelines, party against party, studying accusations against each other, as if they were scholars daily exercised in the school of him that is the accuser of the brethren. All their learning and wit is called up, and poured out, to render others as odious as they are able. All their power, interest, friends, and diligence, are used to ruin and destroy each other. No lies or perjury with some seem unlawful to accomplish so desired an effect. In all companies, the discourse and converse that should be to edify each other in love, and comfort each other by the hopes of dwelling together in heaven, is taken up with slanders, backbitings, scorning, railing, and plotting the overthrow of the best of their neighbours. Innocency never wants odious or scornful names. As if they were acting their part that called Christ and his apostles, and the ancient Christians deceivers, blasphemers, enemies to Cæsar, ringleaders of sedition, that taught men to worship God contrary to the law. Every drunkard and wicked liver can as easily make his conscionable neighbour a rogue, or a traitor, or a schis-

matic, or a hypocrite, as he can open his mouth and speak.

And to justify all this malice is become a virtue ; hating the most religious, is zeal for government and order ; destroying Christ's members, is standing up for the church ; hunting them as dogs do hares, or as hawks do the lesser birds, is a meritorious work, of supererogation no doubt, and will not finally lose its reward. God is served by hating and scorning them that are serious in his service. It is religion to make religion odious, and call it hypocrisy, and to be for that which is uppermost, and befriends their worldly interest, and to make him suspected of disloyalty, who is for obedience to God. Conscience, and fear of sinning, and of damnation, is the mortal enemy to be conquered or driven out of the land ; as if there were no quietness to be expected in men's minds, no concord in the church, no obedience to the clergy, or the laws, no safety from sedition, till conscience be silenced or banished, and men give over fearing God ; or as if Christ and Cæsar could not both reign, but God or princes must be dethroned.

And O that the sacred tribe were innocent, and none of them were the leaders in such hypocritical malignity ! Their canons 'ipso facto' excommunicate all (not excepting princes, parliaments, or judges) that do but say, that any of their ceremonies, liturgy, or officers in church government (not excepting the lowest, or laymen's power of the church, keys by decreeing excommunications and absolutions) are repugnant to the word of God. And when they have 'ipso facto' excommunicated them all, they call them separatists for not coming to their communion. Think not the contradiction and hypocrisy incredible. Read but the fifth, sixth and eighth canon, and judge. They have a law, and by their law he is cut off from the church of Christ, that doth but call any of these the inventions of prelates sinful, or to say, that God forbids them. And the gaol must be his dwelling till he die there, who in ten cases remaineth excommunicate and doth not openly profess that he repenteth, and judgeth that to be sinless, which he is utterly unable so to judge. When we have preached seven and seven years, to persuade a drunkard, a liar, and profane swearer, or an atheist to repent, he liveth quietly out of the gaol though he repent not. But if a man repent not (when he cannot) of judging that God forbids such human inventions and impositions in reli-

gion, take him jailor ; he that will not be for human offices, ceremonies, and impositions, shall not be of our church. And when we cast him out, we will say he separateth. And if he be not of our church, he shall be in gaol ; as if the church and the gaol would hold all the land, except his sin be such a Peccadillo as Atheism, Sadduceeism, bestiality, Hobbism, Popery, manslaughter, adultery, drunkenness, swearing, &c., not aggravated by the crimes of breaking the canons in point of conformity ; or if many thousands cannot or will not come within the doors of the parish church, so they will go to no unlicensed preacher, nor worship God in house or church at all, they live quietly out of prison. But if the mote of an oath or ceremony scrupled be in their eye, that eye must be pulled out (if the mote cannot) or else the whole body be cast into their hell. And if the preacher be but a candidate of domination, his way is oft to call to the magistrate to execute the law upon such as dare presume to worship God openly, till they hold all such imposed oaths, covenants, professions and practices to be lawful. He is to make his auditory believe that such men are dangerous, intolerable persons, and that their meeting to worship God and learn their duty, is to cherish sedition, heresy, and schism. and that rebellion is in their hearts ; and that the preachers that even to a thing indifferent are not of their mind and obedience, are deceivers, and factious, and it is no sacrilege, but a duty to forbid them to preach the Gospel. If the people dare not trust the parson, vicar, or curate of the parish (be he what he will, whom a — patron chooseth for them) with the pastoral ordinary conduct of their souls, or if he preach not at all, if they go to the next parochial conformist for the sacrament, he is to be driven home, and used as disobedient.

Through the great mercy of God while the Bible is licensed, a preacher in England knoweth not how to spend his hour, if he say not somewhat for faith and godliness, love and peace. And when they come down, none are so hated by some of them, as those that believe and do to their utmost what they for fashion sake persuaded them to believe and do. Their neighbours who have not a word with the priest of any thing but this world ; nor read a chapter, or put up a prayer in their families, these are good and quiet neighbours. But if any seriously prepare for their everlast-

ing state, and mind their salvation above the world ; especially if he pray without book, and dislike the ignorant and scandalous lives of sorry priests, these are the dangerous troublers of the land, away with them, and give us those that trouble us not with the talk of God and of death, and heaven or hell, of Scripture or of conscience, and that scruple nothing that we could have them say or do. If such pray, it is but in hypocrisy ; if they go to hear any other preacher, it is in faction. If they speak any words to God which are not written down for them to read, they saucily prate to God, and speak but nonsense. If they be earnest as knowing what they pray for, they do but whine and cut faces, and speak through the nose, or are a pack of groaning hypocrites. It is confessed that the spirit of adoption and supplication is God's gift ; and that this spirit taught the bishops and convocation in what words to pray to God. But if the most holy or learned besides them pretend to it, and think that any may pray by the Spirit's help but the convocation, there are reverend men that will deride that Spirit, or that prayer. I would at least they would let men pray by reason and the sense of their soul's necessities (as a child will beg pardon of an offended father), if they will not give them leave to pray by that Spirit (which all must live by that will be saved).

Physicians use their patients with some humanity, and will not say to him that saith, 'My stomach cannot take down this potion ; I shall cast it up,' You shall take it or die, or go to prison. Or if one say, 'This pill is bigger than my throat can swallow,' they will rather say, it shall be made less, than they will cut his throat wider to get it down. And sure the reason is because the law doth make them physicians to none but volunteers, and give them no compelling power. If it did, I know not what inhumanity they might come to. For I will not believe that there is any thing in divinity which tendeth to make men more inhuman than physicians. I have seen Jews and others, that will eat no swine's flesh ; and I have known many that a taste of cheese would cast into a swoon near death ; and I never knew any say, You shall eat this or die ; nor that ever motioned the making of a law that all men should be imprisoned, or forbidden all other meat, who refused to eat swine's flesh, for fear of tolerating Jews.

But we have priests too many, that will say, 'Take every oath, promise, or ceremony required of you, or preach not, nor worship God openly at all. Take me for your pastor, or you shall have none. Hear me, or hear no man. Receive the communion from me, or from none. Deny not the lawfulness of a ceremony, or be excommunicate.'

4. And is it now any wonder that the people say as they are taught? And these are lessons more easily learnt than a catechism, or the creed, or the meaning of baptism. How quickly can a man learn to call his neighbour Whig or Tory! Or to hate a godly man, or in a tavern or alehouse to scorn them, or drink and curse to their confusion, and to say, 'I hope to see them all hanged or banished out of the land. As a priest that knows not what divinity or the priestly office is, may before he taketh many degrees, attain the ability learnedly to call his godly neighbours schismatics, or hypocrites, or worse; so no doubt a few such sermons, if not a tavern, can quickly teach them that never knew what religion is, yea, that can scarce speak sense, to revile the wisest and best men, as if they were sinners against the true religion, if they will be serious in any true religion at all.

5. O sinful! O miserable land! who kindled all the hellish flames of thy malignity and mad divisions? And who continueth them, and for what? What cloven foot hath entered, and expelled concord? What spirit ruleth thee? Were it the Spirit of Christ, it would be for healing, love, and concord; it would set men on studying to promote love to all, even unto enemies, but much more to the most holy. It would make men zealous of good works, and if it were possible as much as in them lieth, to live peaceably with all men, to bless those that curse them, to pray for those that hate and persecute them, forbearing and forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake forgiveth us. It would teach them while they have time to do good to all men, but especially to them of the household of faith. Men's hearts would be constituted of love. It would become a nature in them. Their speech and converse would be the savoury breath of love. Their dealings towards all men would be the works of love. Their sharpest reproofs would be but to do the sinner good.

But alas, another spirit hath possessed thee, which rageth and teareth thee; and is blind and deaf. It calleth for fire

from heaven, and it kindleth a fire of hell. And sure his name is Legion, for there are many. It passeth under the names of Wisdom, and Hatred of some evil. But it must needs be earthly, sensual, and devilish, for it is neither pure nor peaceable, gentle, or merciful and impartial, but foameth with bitter envy and strife, unto confusion and every evil work. And yet thou knowest not what manner of spirit thou art of.

Is it God that setteth rulers and people against each other? Doth he divide his own kingdom against itself, when he tells that the devil will not do so by his? Is it God that sets the parts of the same body in a hatred and war against each other; as if it were the interest of the nobler and the servile parts to weaken or destroy each other? And it were an addition to the health and welfare of the one, which is gotten from conquest from the other? Is it God that maketh people despise or dishonour their lawful governors, or any rulers to hate the best subjects, and desire more to be feared than to be loved, and rather to have power to do hurt, than actually to do good? Is it God that sets corporations, and churches, and neighbours, and families, in a state of malice, vexation, strife, and a kind of war against each other? Doth the Spirit of God indite the malicious pamphlets, which exercise the utmost of wit and hatred, to destroy love, and to call the nation into the devil's camp, by mutual hatred to live as enemies, and fight against the Lord and the ways of peace? And if any endeavour a reconciling healing of our wounds, it is turned into scorn, and his healing motions are represented as the grand causes of division; and to beg for peace is heinous schism, and next rebellion against the church, and a crime sufficient to forfeit that man's peace and reputation: and he that tells men of the only possible terms of concord, is made the chiefest cause of discord. To serve and worship God no otherwise than Peter and Paul did, and than God prescribeth, is enough to render us unworthy to live on English earth; and if England may not suffer such, why should any other nation suffer them? There are men that keep holy days for St. Peter, and St. Paul, and dedicate churches to them, and their bellies are maintained at divers rates, and their wealth, and revenues, and grandeur help up, by that which is dedicated to these churches, and to alienate any of this super-

fluity from their flesh were worse sacrilege than to cast out and silence a thousand faithful preachers; and yet if St. Paul were a preacher now in France, Spain, Italy or England, and would worship God but as he did when he was on earth, and would not swear, say and do as much more as the bishop's canons bid him, I think we should again hear those words, Acts xxii. 22., "Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live" (here); unless he wrought miracles to convince men; and whether those would prevail is a doubtful case; or whether he would not pass for a deceiver and fanatic.

6. As in times of war, all broken, beggarly and idle fellows, turn soldiers, as the easiest trade to live by, are never after good for any other trade, but to kill and rob men; so the love-killing regiments, have forsaken other trades, and this is like to put down all. Booksellers complain that they can sell few books but news, and scorning and invective libels. And what is the subject of our (formerly weekly and now daily) news-books? Why, they tell us that such a city or corporation are all together by the ears as enemies, some choosing one mayor and some another; some called Whigs, and others Tories; some seeking the ruin and blood of others, and some hardly escaping the power of false witnesses and oaths! One jury acquitting a man whose life is sought, and another condemning him. In such a town or city so many fined, and so many distrained on, and so many crowded into jails, and such and such preachers cast into prison, and such an one dead there, for praying to God, and openly worshipping him without book, or by no book but his own. In such and such a country the people prosecuting each other on such accounts, and some flying into other parts, and some into America to seek that peace among savages, and wolves, and serpents, in wildernesses, which they could not have under sacred Protestant prelates and their clergy. In France the poor Protestants hunted like hares, neither suffered to live at home, nor to fly naked to beg their bread in other lands; and all this for the concord and peace of the holy Catholic church; a pattern so worthy of imitation, that even such excellent men as Grotius think, that it is all hazards, labour and cost, to reduce England and the Lutherans to the French church consistence, and to silence and ruin all as Calvinists that are

against it. From Hungary we must read, how the persecuted Protestants, after their utmost suffering and patience, are fain to call in Turks to save them from the cruelties of Christians. And that those parts that are under the Turks have far more prosperity and freedom in religion, than those that are under the Emperor and Papists.

And Protestants under them are kept in continual fear, as knowing that it is their law and doctrine, that princes are bound to do their best to exterminate or destroy them, on pain of excommunication, deposition and damnation: and remembering the inquisitions, the Piedmont, French, Dutch, Irish, &c. massacres: so that they are brought to this hard dilemma, choose whether you will be dead men, or be proclaimed rebels. If whole countries will not lie down and die patiently without self-defence, they are odious rebels.

These, and such other are the subjects of our news-books, which have broken the poor booksellers, who were wont to live by selling books of learning, and of practical divinity. And too many preachers are fain to be short as well as formal in their sermons for Christian love, because they spend so much time in preaching up hatred and destruction. Were there but an art that could devise any engine that could reach the heart, and turn it into the hatred of those that never did them wrong, (as they say some philters and charms will make men mad with love;) or if any apothecary had an effectual medicine against brotherly love, I doubt these would become the most accustomed shops and prosperous trades in all the city: but for want of such, some pulpits, printers, booksellers, clubs, drinking-houses, and play-houses, (to pass by fouler) must serve the turn. But if God have not mercy on the land by restraining them, gunpowder-makers, gunsmiths, sword-sellers, soldiers, swearers and executioners, will swallow up most other trades in the land. It is worth inquiry whether in foresight of this, they set not their sons to such trades as these, or apprentices to such lawyers as are best at preparative accusations, and have learned Tertullus's art; or to such schools and tutors as can teach them the learning of Zedekiah, and the four hundred prophets; 1 Kings xxii.

7. And all this is the more inexcusable and lamentable, because they came but lately out of the fire, which this same malignant spirit kindled; the very same causes cast the

three kingdoms into dreadful flames and blood. The histories of the bloody murder of many hundred thousands called Albigenes, Waldenses and Bohemians, in Piedmont, Germany and elsewhere, and of the Netherlands' cruelties, the Spanish inquisitions and invasion, the murder of thirty or forty thousand at once in France, and of two of their kings, the powder-plot here, as well as the bonfires in Queen Mary's days, and much more their councils and doctors defending and commanding such usage of Protestants, did set all our parliaments one after another into a vehement unwillingness to be so used, and to fall into their hands that will do it if they can : and when the evil spirit hath raised cross interests and distrusts between king and parliament, the Papists seeming to be for the war and king, and suddenly murdering in Ireland no fewer than two hundred thousand, and pretending the king's commission, and threatening the like in England, frightened people into the army, after raised by the parliament. And though I think all that war in England killed not the fourth part so many as the Papists had murdered in Ireland ; yet so dismal and odious was it, and had so direful an end, as loudly told us how bad the causes and beginnings were. Few parts of the land were free from spoil, plunder and poverty ; yea, or from terrible sieges and fields of blood : Englishmen labouring to destroy each other, and some hiring foreigners to help them : and lads running from their parents to be as apprentices to the man-killing trade. Counties were against counties, cities against cities, neighbours against neighbours, single persons flying from men as from bears and tigers, as after in the plague-time, afraid of almost all they met : and at last the very armies falling out among themselves ; the first raised for the parliament, were mastered by a second party, that brought in (as auxiliaries) a new imposition ; and that party after mastered and cast down by a third that brought in a new cause ; and that prevailing, pulling down their masters, an usurper odiously destroying the king, and setting up himself with another title, and subduing and ruining those that were against it, even both the parties that began the war ; and yet when he was dead, to shew the world what divisions can do, that same victorious, rebellious army, fell all into pieces by its own discord, and was totally dissolved as by a miracle, without one drop of blood that ever I could hear of, and

the victorious leaders many of them hanged, drawn and quartered, and their heads and quarters hanged up on the city gates.

And would not one think that a nation of men in their wits, should after so long and sad experience of the mischiefs of hatred and division, be willing of the reviving of love and concord, and hate all motions of dividing any more? But alas, they hate them that would heal our wounds; and if any one lay on a healing plaster, there are hands too many, both lay and clergy, ready with rage to pull it off, and yet it is all on pretence of healing us, that they will not suffer us to be healed; for the way of peace they have not known. Unhappy surgeons that know no balsam but corrosives and distilled vinegar, yea, no way of healing but by dismembering, even the most useful members of the body. Having learned of the Romish leeches that live on blood, when they are for exhausting the vital stock, and cast the kingdom into a palsy or marasmus, they tell you it was all but corrupt or hæmorrhoidal blood, and the loss of it necessary to cure the madness of the land.

The beginning of some reconciliation between the first contending parties, began to flatter us with the hopes of restored love and quietness: secret consultations prepared the way: lords, knights and gentlemen, print their protestations for oblivion and reconciliation, and against revenge. Hereupon those that by land and sea, in the three kingdoms had fought against the king, restore him: the land rejoiceth in the smiling hopes of reviving charity and concord. The king chiefly causeth these hopes by his declarations and act of oblivion, and especially his healing gracious declaration about ecclesiastical affairs. The house of commons and the city ministers give him thanks for it: who would have thought now but such experience, such protestations, such obligations, such authorities, should have put the whole kingdom into a longing desire to perfect the work of love and peace? But it proved clean contrary: some had other things in their heads and hearts; outlandish fashions, especially French, have long been the badge of English folly! There are men in Spain that trade much in the fire, and Queen Mary brought the trade into England: there are men in many other foreign lands, who are so devout, that their canons and religion rule their appetites; and they love no

meat like a carbonadoed Protestant, nor are pleased with any perfume or incense so much as with the smell of a roasted saint, first called a heretic or schismatic: like the Roman tyrant that gloried in the sweetness of the smell when he smelt the stink of the carcasses which he had laid to dung the field. And there were men abroad that learned these fashions, and contracted such a familiarity and love to foreigners, as that for obtaining union with them, all the divisions, distractions and calamities of England and Scotland, are not thought too dear a sacrifice: and as some sons of Nonconformists must be doubly virulent to expiate the guilt of their original sin; so some Englishmen must, like Samson and David, bring double testimony of their real enmity to the Philistines, from their skins, before they can be trusted abroad as real reconcilers: and they say that there are some things that will be closely united, by no cement so well as by human blood. Doubtless the Gospel as used in English, and preached by true Protestants, (such as the pseudo-bellamy in Philanax Anglicus hatefully calleth Protestants off sincerity,) goeth not with many beyond sea, for the same Gospel which they believe. And therefore no wonder if the preachers of it be displeasing to them; and he that will please them, and unite with them, must silence or oppose those that they would have to be silenced or disgraced. And some think that union with many kingdoms of Christians, which call themselves the Catholic church, is much to be preferred before the love and concord of a hated party in our island. And as Dr. Saywell (the master of a college, and bishop Gunning's chaplain) saith (to prove that there is a universal and legislative power in the clergy, over kingdoms as well as persons,) "If more persons or particular churches give offence by heresy, schism, &c. the CHURCH UNIVERSAL, or the rest of the bishops may reprove them for it, and then there is no reason why one man should be censured and many should go free, and consequently our Saviour hath established the authority of his church over all Christians, as well particular churches as private men: churches of kingdoms and nations have a SOVEREIGNTY over them to which they must yield obedience. "The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee, shall perish: yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted;" Isa. lx. 12. p. 343.

Though kings have no civil universal sovereign over

them but Christ, yet it seems all the world, both kings and kingdoms, have an ecclesiastical sovereignty over them all. Communion of equals and Christian counsel and reproof is not enough, such as all neighbour princes may use towards one another; nor the denial of such communion to the incapable: but all kings and kingdoms must be under church sovereignty, which hath a legislative and judicial power over them all, to excommunicate, absolve them, &c. And how much more 'in ordine ad spiritualia', the common exposition of ecclesiastical power, tells you: as experience long told many kingdoms what the excommunicating of a king, and the interdicting a kingdom the worship of God, do signify towards their dethroning or invasion.

And all this must be done, not as for the pope, but under the name of a general council, and the poor pope shall have no power, but, say some, to call that council, and call it general when there is no such thing, and preside in it, and rule us as chief patriarch and St. Peter's successor, in the intervals of general councils, (that is, continually) and that not arbitrarily, but by the laws of the church or councils, (and no mortal man can tell which those authorized legislative councils are, among the hundreds of erroneous or contradicting ones.) So that Popery in England is an abhorred thing; for it is nothing with some but the pope's absolute government of the whole church, as without or above laws and ecclesiastical parliaments.

And can you reconcile all this to our oath of supremacy, and the canons that establish it, renouncing all foreign jurisdiction? Yea, easily, we have been told it meaneth only foreign civil jurisdiction which belongs to the king, and not foreign ecclesiastical jurisdiction, (which is all that the sober popes do claim, save indirectly 'in ordine ad spiritualia'). To command a nation on pain of excommunication and damnation (according to divers councils), to renounce their allegiance to their excommunicate prince, and to depose him, and set up another, is no act of civil, but of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, which yet hath dethroned emperors and overthrown dominions.

And saith archbishop Laud, in Dr. Stillingfleet's defence of him, p. 540. "It doth not follow, because the church may err, therefore she may not govern. For the church hath only a pastoral power, to teach and direct, but a pretorian

also, to control and censure, &c. And for external obedience to general councils when they err, "Consider whether it be not fit to allow a general council that honour and privilege which all other great courts have;" Stillingfleet, page 534.

So that instead of a counsel of equals for concord (as princes use for peace with their neighbours,) we have an universal sovereign court set up with pretorian power, to make binding laws, and pass judgment to all the Christian world, and (say some) they are schismatics that obey not these universal laws; and obedience to them, and suppressing all forbidden assemblies for God's worship is the only way to Christian concord.

And where this foreign jurisdiction is made of such absolute necessity, that without subjection to it by kings and kingdoms, there is no concord to be had, nor any avoiding of the guilt of schism, what wonder if some can wish that silencings, reproaches, ruins, and confusions may be thought no dear price to obtain an universal union; for which Christ and his law are sufficient. They that have read Grotius, Cassander, Baldwin, Hoffmeister, Erasmus, Archbishop Laud, Dr. Heylin of his life, Bishop Sparrow, Archbishop Bromhal, and the Prefacer Bishop Parker, Thorndike, Bishop Gunning and his chaplain Dr. Saywell, and such others, and against them all have read Dr. Isaac Barrow of the supremacy against Thorndike, &c. may understand where our difference and danger lieth.

8. And is England's self-destroying disease incurable! God hath in wonderful mercy given us peace from foreign enemies: and is there no hope of prevailing with Englishmen to live together in peace? Must that of Isa. xlix. 36. be our case, to eat our own flesh, and be drunk with our own blood as with sweet wine? Alas, no counsel no petitions, no tears, no experience, no judgments of God by plagues and flames have hitherto one jot prevailed; but the ulcer of men's minds grows more and more putrid and malignant!

Two ways are by some proposed: first that all the conscientious worshippers of God in the kingdom, should bring their judgments to a full conformity, in every particular to their rulers; when as first they cannot tell us who these must be: some say to the king or law; some say to the bishops in a national convocation; others say, to the aforesaid fo-

reign universal sovereignty of general councils, (with the patriarchs). If the first be the way, what kingdoms must it be in? Is it no where but in Britain? Or also in France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Poland? And must there be as many religions as kings and laws will make? And how far must this go? And where must we stop? Must kings choose us a God? Or choose whether we shall have any God, any Christ, any Bible, any worship of God, and so any heaven?

If it be the bishops that must be the common rule of our religion, what countries and ages doth this rule serve for? Was it the rule where princes and prelates were Arians, or Nestorians, or Eutychians, or Monothelites, or Papists? Is it the rule now in France, Spain, Italy, &c. Or was it so in the Pope's Catholic church from Anno 700 till the Reformation?

If it be general councils, I am weary of repeating the proofs that there never was one, nor ever is like to be one, or ought to be. If it be an European council, who shall call them, and who shall judge whether it be equal, and so far general? And are not the greater number of European councils, who shall call them, and who shall judge whether it be equal, and so far general? And are not the greater number of European bishops known Papists? And will they not then be the major vote? And so we must be as bad as they? And if the rest of the Christian world be not bound by them (in Greece, Ethiopia, Armenia, Syria, &c.), why are we? Is it the council of Arminum, Sirmium, Milan, &c.; or of Ephesus 2, Nice 2d., many at Constantinople, at the Lateran, at Lyons, at Florence, at Constance, at Basil, at Trent, that are our rule? Must all that will be Catholics and saved, hold all the heresies, contradictions, and corruptions that councils have held, and obey all their load of canons? If the Italians, French, English, &c. are all disagreed, how many and which councils we must obey, can all poor people know which is the right? And hath Christ left religion so uncertain a thing? Or so mutable that general councils of prelates may be still increasing it? If he was the maker of it, by himself and his apostles, we may know more certainly where to find it: most Christians may say, 'Christ we know, and Peter and Paul, &c. we know; but your councils are too many, too voluminous, too uncertain for us to know.'

But if they are such an absolutely necessary rule as you pretend, why do not teachers preach them to us daily as they do the sacred Scriptures ?

If any would come down to confine these universal laws only to things indifferent, alas, must the world be confounded and divided about things indifferent? Are not things indifferent variable as countries and ages are? And must the world have one sovereignty to make laws for them? Cannot we have life, liberty, peace and love, without things indifferent? or without agreeing in them? Are there any two in the whole world that are not ignorant, and that differ not about many greater matters than things indifferent? Doth he know himself, or know what a man is, that thinks all tolerated Christians must be so skilled in all things indifferent, which men may impose, as to know them to be such; when it is so hard to teach the people things necessary, few and plain? Alas, Lord! why must the churches be left in such hands?

9. But some have found out another remedy for our divisions; and that is, that only the bishops shall be engaged to a foreign jurisdiction, or profess the necessity of obeying them, (under the name of a general council, and in the intervals, of a college of the bishops of the whole world, as one aristocracy;) and that this shall not be imposed on any lay-communicants, but their consciences shall be left at liberty; nor at the first on the inferior clergy, till they are prepared to receive it; but only that the people obey the priests and prelates, and the priests obey the prelates and all their governing officers, and the prelates only profess obedience to the pretorian court, called The Catholic Church. Bishop Gunning's chaplain tells us that the laity are not required in order to communion to declare for general councils. Whether they use the like moderation in France, Spain, Germany, I know not, viz. For the bishops only to profess obedience to the pope, and the priests to the bishops, and the people to the priests and bishops. I hear they go further.

And if conventicles (as they will call them) are also suppressed, we need not fear religious violence, murder and ruin (upon a feared Roman successor). For, saith the same bishop's chaplain, p. 283. 'For matters may be so ordered, that all officers, ecclesiastical, civil and military, and all that

are employed in power or authority of any kind, be persons both of known loyalty to the crown, and yet faithful sons of the church, and firm to the established religion, and the laws that they act by may be so explained in the favour of those that conform to the public worship, and the discouragement of all dissenters, that we must reasonably be secure from all violence that the Papists can offer to force our submission : for when all our bishops and clergy are under strict obligations and oaths, and the people are guided by them ; and all officers civil and military are firm to the same interest, and under severe penalties if they act any thing to the contrary : then what probable danger can there be of any violence or disturbance to force us out of our religion, when all things are thus secured, and the power of external execution is generally in the hands of men of our own persuasion.'

Ans. The Dr. says well ; I am of his mind in this. When they have subdued and cast out all dissenters (as they do in France), and the bishops and clergy are settled under a foreign church-jurisdiction, and the people settled in obedience to them, and all offices, civil, military and ecclesiastic in their hands, I do not think they need to fear that the Papists will use violence to change their religion, whoever reigneth.

But the question is, whether this supposes an union with all in England that are now against a foreign jurisdiction, or only the destruction of them, or else the forcing them to these terms ? As to a destruction of them, or forcing them to such terms, surely violence must do this. And what though the subjects of foreign power fear no violence, are all the rest (that is, the Protestants) of the kingdom inconsiderable ? We suppose the old church of England, and all our parliaments since the Reformation, were against a foreign jurisdiction : and will it be no loss to England to destroy so many, that is, the body of the land ?

But the question is, whether they may not be thus brought to concord by consent ? I answer, no ; unless you suppose them to be men that indeed have no religion, and therefore can easily part with the bare name. For they are sworn by the oath of supremacy against all foreign jurisdiction : and put the case that the pope and a council, or the king of France would bring the emperor's or the king's army to serve him, and be at his command, and he would only desire that the general officers and colonels may be engaged

to obey him, and the captains and lower officers to obey them, and the soldiers to obey the officers; but the common soldiers shall be bound to no more, than this obedience to their officers. Query, Whether all these soldiers be not traitors to the king or emperor? Cromwell's common soldiers took no commissions against king or parliament; they did but obey their officers that pulled down both. And were they therefore guiltless? Protestants will not thus follow such prelates against their oaths, and against the known truth, and against their duty to God and the king.

10. But though it be notorious that domination and jurisdiction be the things which cause the Papal clergy to trouble and tear the Christian world, what is it that makes the laity so mad, and getteth this clergy such a militant crowd against their own tranquillity and salvation? It is as visible as any moral thing, that the church's divisions, and wars, and miseries have about a thousand years risen, from satan's thrusting such worldly, fleshly, unholy men into holy offices, who seek them but to serve their pride and covetousness, and fleshly appetites, and ease, and who are enemies at the heart to the serious obedience to Christ, which formally they preach. Christ's own apostles in their time of ignorance, began to strive which of them should be greatest; of which we have recorded his sharp rebuke; which St. Peter himself did after second, in 1 Pet. v. 1—3. in words so plain, that if his pretended successors had not first claimed a power (as the church) to be the determining expounders of all the Bible, they had lain under the condemnation of Christ and Peter, naked, without a defence or cloak: but this church-expounding authority sets them above all the word of God, which is now but what they please to make it, and an instrument to execute their wills. And indeed it is now rather the pope and his prelates and councils than Christ, that are the law makers to the church; for it is not he that maketh the words only that makes the law, but he that giveth them their sense. The words are but as the body, and the sense is the soul of the law. The ministerial church now scorn the name of ministers, and being become pretorian and magisterial, they give Christ and his Spirit in the apostles leave to make the words and body of the Scripture or divine law, as God formed Adam's body of the dust, so that they may give it the breath of life, and also may make far more volu-

minous laws of their own, and cut off and condemn all the children of God, that cannot believe that it is lawful to obey them.

And though the ignorant think that the claim of universal legislation and judgment, in the universal church and general councils, be no service to the domination of particular clergymen, no, nor to any, (seeing there never will be a general council,) they understand not the mystery of iniquity, and mistake. We have English writers that have told them, 1. That indeed power is first given to the body, (fine doctrine for royalists,) but by the body it is given to the prelates to use for them. 2. That as a general council hath the supreme power, so the prelates under them have the inferior ruling power, and the executive in the intervals of councils. 3. That as councils represent the church in sovereignty, so every bishop is by his office, the true representative of the clergy of his diocese, and every metropolitan the representative of his province, and every patriarch of his patriarchate; and then are not the patriarchs (at least with the metropolitans,) universal rulers in such intervals? 4. And the pope is the patriarch of the West, and hath a primacy in the church universal, and must be confest to be ‘*principium unitas catholicæ*,’ and say some, to be the president of councils. 5. To which others add, that it belongs only to the president to call councils, and to judge which are lawful, without whose call they are so far from binding us, that they are themselves but unlawful routs. And what would you have more?

But what is all this to the poor priests? What? Why 6. The people know not what the volumes of councils say, and it is the priests (or nobody) that must tell it them, (both what their exposition of Scripture is, and what their own additional laws are,) without which they cannot be obeyed. So that indeed the people’s faith is ultimately resolved into the authority of the priest, who tells them what the bishop saith, who tells them what the metropolitan and his synod saith, who tells them what the chief patriarch and a general council saith, who tell them determinatively what Christ and the Scripture saith and meaneth.

But what is this to councils when there are none? Yes, 7. Those that are past and gone, have left all those binding

laws by which the present bishops as an aristocracy must govern all the Christian world.

But are not they for monarchy in the state? How come they then to plead for a sovereign aristocracy over the catholic church, and how come even the French clergy to be for the power of a church parliament above the pope? I cannot answer that; let the pope and they debate it.

But I wonder that archbishop Laud should be for the derivation of all power from the body, as Richard Hooker is. See Dr. Stillingfleet's *Defence* of him, p. 544, 545, &c. "No body collective, whensoever it assembled itself, did ever give more power to the representing body of it, than a binding power upon itself and all particulars; nor ever did it give this power, otherwise than with this reservation in nature, that it would call again and reform, and if need were, abrogate any law or ordinances upon just cause made evident, that the representing body had failed in trust or truth. And this power no body collective, ecclesiastical or civil, can put out of itself, or give away to a parliament or council, or call it what you will, that represents it.—The power which a council hath to order, settle and define differences arising concerning faith, it hath not by any immediate institution of Christ, but it was prudently taken up by the church from the apostles' example."

I confess that the generality of politicians and lawyers, heathens, Papists, and Protestants go much this way, as to civil government, and say that the '*majestas personalis*' is in the king or senate, but the '*majestas realis*' in the body which giveth the organical power, and on just cause may take it away. It is no honour to be singular in politics, and I have said enough of this elsewhere, (*Christ. Direct.* p. I.) But if it be the body of the whole church on earth that must give church officers and councils their power, and recal it when there is cause, if ever the whole Christian world meet together to vote it, when it cometh to polling, we will give both the monarchical and the aristocratical conciliary Papists three for one, to try who hath the power given by the body. But while two or three parts do already disown almost all their councils, the case is decided. But if an old council's heresies, errors, or tyranny can be invalidated only by a new one that is truly general, or a new one as papal as

the last, we confess that Trent canons are like to be the law to the end of the world.

But again, what is it that maketh so many of the laity serve the popish prelate's universal claim, or keep up the destructive enmity and divisions of the Christian world? A stranger would think that it were chiefly caused by some great contrariety of real interests, or that one party adhered to some principles or practices, which were already hurtful to the other's rights; while both were serious for Christianity. But it is become by long experience notorious, that all the Christian world's calamitous divisions are principally from the old enmity between the woman's and the serpent's seed, and that all is but the prosecution of that which their first patriarch Cain began; exemplified after in the discrimination of the children of men, and the sons of God, and in Esau and Jacob, Ishmael and Isaac, and so down to the days of the apostles. And saith Paul, as he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now." Among us it is notorious, that if we knew how to cure men of the radical enmity of the flesh against the Spirit, and of a carnal mind's averseness to God and serious godliness, the rest of our differences were never like to continue our wounds and cruel factions.

In families you may hear that this is the fundamental difference. Husband and wife, parents and children, masters and servants, upon the mere account of serious godliness, do live like enemies, that are impatient of each other. If the husband be ungodly, the wife, children, or servants, that have but a care of their salvation, are still under his restraints, or frowns, or scorns. This praying, (especially if it be without book,) so much preaching and hearing, yea, any serious talk of God, or heaven, or Scripture, is a troublesome weariness to him; and he tells them it is but hypocrisy, or more ado than needs. If any compassionately tell him of the evil of his swearing, or tippling, or profaneness, he tells them they are precise Puritans or fanatics, and worse than he. If they will needs hear sermons, he will have them go but to some cold or ignorant preacher, or one that will please him with a calumny or scorn at Puritans, or that will say as he doth, that this stir for salvation, and meddling so much with Scripture and religion, is but proud, self-conceit-

fanaticism. In a word, it is serious preaching, and hearing, and reading God's word; serious praying, and preparation for the sacrament; serious discourse of the state of their souls, and preparation for death, judgment, and eternity; serious fearing and avoiding sin, and speaking against the sin of others, that is the common eyesore and troubler of the world, which they secretly hate, and cannot bear with in their families, in their neighbours, in magistrates, in ministers or people.

And because it easeth their minds by vent, and by keeping up some hopes that they may be saved without this serious godliness themselves, they cherish a conceit that the persons that herein differ from them are as bad, if not much worse than others; and gladly hear those that slander and deride them. Such company, such pamphlets, such sermons please them. And to make them odious, they have for them some contemptuous scornful nickname; which, though it be of no signification, is as effectual as the truest charge. Among the Roman sects, do but call a man a heretic or schismatic, a Lutheran, a Calvinist, a Zuinglian; and elsewhere do but call him a sectary, a schismatic, a Puritan, a Calvinist, a Nonconformist, an Independent, a Presbyterian, a Roundhead, a Fanatic, a Whig, and it serveth the turn as well as if you had proved him a proud hypocrite, or a rebel. And there be among the real schismatics also some persons, that if you do but call a man Episcopal, a Conformist, an Arminian, a Church-of-England-man, that goeth to the common-prayer, they think that he must needs be a temporizer, graceless or dangerously unsound.

And thus the miseries of the land are continued and increased. But because the spirit of Cain is the grand incendiary, and the enmity against serious holiness throughout all the world, is the principal cause of divisions, hatred, wars and bloodshed, I will here annex many reasons which, with men that have any reason left them, should cure this malignant enmity to holiness, if men will but soberly consider them.

I have said so much to such already, especially in my "Saints' Rest," "Now or Never," my "Family Book," and "A Saint or a Brute," that I cannot do this work again without repeating much that is said. But seeing all that doth not serve, and the ulcer breaketh out more dangerously than

ever, till it come to a 'noli me tangere,' we must continue some hope and use of means; and if we lay on fresh plaisters of the old materials, while only new books are by such regarded, we are bound to do our best. It is but so much labour lost; and it is not utterly lost to ourselves, while we have peace of conscience in God's acceptance.

But being sure to be misreported when I have done my best to be understood, that I be not guilty of it, I will first shew what I mean by serious godliness, and next what I mean by malignity or enmity to serious godliness.

CHAPTER II.

Whom I mean by Godly Persons, and whom by Malignant Enemies to Godliness.

By Godliness I do not mean, 1. Any superstition, or making religions, or religious duties which God never made, and extolling these, and the party that are for them. God hath made us religious work enough. Could we do that well, we need no more. Religion, so far as it is made by men, is no religion, but a contradiction or equivocation; for religion is our obligation and duty to God, and conscience of it. Could I be for superstition, or more religion than God hath made us, I might be for all the new religions of Rome, Franciscans, Dominicans, Carthusians, Jesuits, Oratorians, and all the rest. And I might be for their works of supererogation, their massings, worshipping bread, angels, dead saints, images, their pilgrimages, relics, and all their pretended traditions and councils, their new-made church-laws, and I should know no end.

And 2. By godliness I mean not any singular, odd opinion differing from the Scripture, and making a sect, or any error whatsoever; nor any opinion which is contrary to any thing which the whole church on earth did ever hold as necessary to salvation or communion.

Nor 3. Do I mean any truth or duty of inferior moment, which only makes to the wellbeing of a Christian, though this be an inferior part of godliness; at least not

that which a godly, willing person knows not to be his duty.

Much less, 4. Do I mean any proud, false conceit of a man's own godliness, and becoming one of an unwarrantable sect, that he may be conspicuous to others, or cherish this presumption in himself, and say to others, "Stand by, I am holier than thou." Or as the Pharisee, "I thank thee Lord, that I am not as this publican." (Though yet all that will be saved must differ greatly from the ungodly, and must with thankfulness own God's grace.)

Nor 5. Do I mean any unlawful practice, which on the pretence of godliness may be done, whether unjust censures, backbiting, unwarrantable separations from others, divisions, disobedience to authority, sedition, rebellion, &c. These are all contrary to godliness and true religion. Christ is the strictest condemner of them, and godliness the best cure. If any godly or religious person be guilty of any one of these, 1. It cannot be as known and in a predominant degree. 2. And it is his disease (as a leprosy to a man) and not his godliness.

But by godliness I mean only the serious consent to and performance of the covenant which we made with God in our baptism. That we seriously believe that there is one only God, of most perfect power, knowledge, and goodness, our Creator, Maintainer, Governor, and end, whom we must obey, and serve, and love, above all creatures whatsoever; and that he is the "Rewarder of them that diligently seek him," and will give everlasting blessedness to the faithful, and everlastingly punish the ungodly. That we seriously believe that Jesus Christ is the Redeemer and Saviour, who teacheth, ruleth, pardoneth, sanctifieth, and saveth all true penitent believers; who is our Intercessor, Head, and Judge. That we seriously believe that the Holy Ghost indited and sealed by his gifts and miracles the doctrine and writings of the prophets and apostles, now recorded in the Scriptures, and that he is sent from the Father and the Son to regenerate, sanctify, comfort, and strengthen those that shall be saved.

And that we seriously consent to love and obey God our Father, Saviour, and Sanctifier, as his creatures, subjects, and children in these relations, that we may be pardoned and saved by him. And that we be willing to forsake the devil

and his works, and the world and flesh, so far as they would tempt us to break this covenant against God, and our obedience and salvation.

And lastly, That we seriously or sincerely (though not perfectly) endeavour in our lives to keep his covenant preferring God in our love and obedience, and our hopes of life everlasting, before all the pleasures and treasures of this world, and resisting the temptations of the devil, world, and flesh, which would turn us from him, and from our obedience and hope. And that we truly (though not perfectly) trust God and our Redeemer for the heavenly glory which he hath promised.

This is plainly, distinctly, and fully what I mean by godliness or holiness. And such are the persons (though all imperfect, and of divers degrees) which I call saints or godly. He that feigneth me to mean any thing else, doth but abuse himself and me. If there be none such, there are no Christians, and all the word of God is vain.

But every duty commanded by God is a part of the matter of our obedience and religion; viz. As according to the first commandment to take God for our God, to be absolutely obeyed, loved, and trusted, and to renounce all idols, and neither to obey love, or trust ourselves or any other creatures before him; so also according to the second commandment, to renounce all scandalous symbolizing with idolaters, in the outward worship of God in their sinful way; especially by images, and other appearances of idolatry. And that we worship God according to his word.

And according to the third commandment, that we avoid all profanation of holy things; all perjury, false vows, and fathering falsehoods upon God or his words, and rash swearing, and irreverent using of God's name, and turning his worship into a lifeless form.

And according to the fourth commandment, that we worship God publicly in solemn assemblies, and devote the Lord's day to holy exercises; that we search the Scriptures, pray for what God hath promised, or commanded; meditate and confer of holy things, and celebrate the sacraments in the communion of saints.

And so according to the second table that we honour and obey our parents, and (as far as their right of government reacheth) all other that God sets over us. And dishonour

them not, nor obey civil, ecclesiastical, or domestical usurpers against them.

That we do our best to save our neighbour's life and bodily welfare, against murderers or usurpers; and hurt no man's life or health either violently or by Jezebel's pretence of justice.

That we keep our senses, thoughts, affections, passions, and actions, from all unchastity and immodest lasciviousness.

That we wrong no man in his estate, but to our power help them.

That we avoid all injustice, lying, false witness, false judgment, and oppressive, unrighteous government; and promote truth and justice to our power.

And lastly, that we love our neighbour as ourselves, and take his welfare and his sufferings as our own, and do as we would have others do by us, and covet not to draw from him to ourselves.

So that he that pretendeth to love God and godliness, and obedience to Christ, and yet loveth not such a life as this, he lieth, or says he knows not what.

And he that hateth men or opposeth them, for any one of all these duties (for hearing or reading God's word, for praying for things promised, for holy conference and meditation, for sanctifying the Lord's day, for desiring a shepherd and not a wolf; for abhorring profaneness, and other great sins), doth thereby declare that it is so much of godliness or obedience which he abhorreth; and it is through ignorance doubtless if he seriously love and practise the rest of God's commands.

II. By malignant enemies of godliness, 1. I do not mean every one that hath any backwardness to any duty, which he overcometh in the practice; nor every one that is guilty of some omissions. The spirit is willing, and the flesh is weak.

2. I mean not those that are godly in the main so far as they can know, but through education or otherwise are ignorant of some integral truths or duties, and have an opposing contentious zeal against them by mistake; and by factious company are taught therefore to speak evil falsely of those from whom they differ. I hear some revile all even with terms of enmity and unchristian threatenings, yea, seek-

ing their ruin, who do not swear, say, and practise all that is required to English conformity. I do not conclude them therefore malignant enemies of godliness, if they live soberly, righteously, and godly in their way, and prefer God before men, heaven before earth, the soul before the body, and a holy life before the pleasures and profits of the flesh. If they are uncharitable against all that are not for Diocesans, laychancellors, excommunications, symbolical crossing of children as a covenanting sign of Christianity, and all the rest, I wish them more charity, but I call them not malignant enemies.

I find Bishop Gunning's chaplain thinks that he doth say well, when he saith, that 'Not only murderers, adulterers, drunkards, but such schismatics as disturb the peace, and weaken the authority of the church's disciples (theirs), are to be excommunicated and reckoned among heathens and publicans; and enemies to the Gospel of Christ (if they preach it without a Diocesan's license.)' page 214. And that it is already our case, that it is a very difficult matter to find a jury and witnesses, especially among the dissenters, upon whose credit we may rely. All this signifieth how little blind faction is to be believed; and how far it conquereth even human modesty and veracity. But yet I differ it from the enmity to godliness which I speak of. And that you may see that he is no Papist, though for a foreign jurisdiction, he tells you of Cromwell that 'There is too great a reason to suspect that he intended to settle popery in the nation, when matters had been ripe to go through with it.' I confess this is news to me. I have roundly told him to his face of his disloyalty in deposing our English monarchy, and told the world then of his treacherous usurpation, but it never came into my thoughts that he intended to settle popery in the nation. But if these words come from clergy truth and modesty, they are very considerable. I hope the old royalists will be against popery the more if Cromwell was for it. And the Papists I hope will be more angry with Dr. Moulin, that answereth Philanax Anglicus, for making the king's death to be caused and concluded by the Papists, if Cromwell was for them. But faction will face men down, that snow is black.

So on the other side, I hear some that are against infant baptism, sharply censure all that are not of their mind.

And some over sharply censure the prelatists and conformists; and almost all the Christian world is divided into parties, that too little stick at the injurious censuring of others; the Papists, Greeks, Abassines, Armenians, Nestorians, Jacobites, &c. And among the Papists, the Dominicans and Molinists, and Jansenians, &c. And among the Protestants, too many. This is no small sin, but it is not that enmity to godliness itself which I mean.

3. And I mean not by malignity, men's differences in civil and political controversies. Though I take popery to be half a civil controversy, and to be insufferable by such princes and people whom they bind themselves to depose and destroy. And that to subject all the Christian world to the legislative, judicial, and executive government of one pope, or one pretorian court, is no better than to proclaim such a pope or court to be public enemies and usurpers to all Christian princes and states. But yet abundance of political differences may consist with serious piety. My reason is, because God hath not made political controversies so clear as that all good Christians can resolve them. Neither the light of nature, nor the Bible, nor tradition, endeth them. Nor hath he put them into our creed, or the ten commandments, nor laid men's salvation on them, as he hath done on the essentials of religion. Nor commanded all men to be so well skilled in statute-books and common law, as to be able to know which party is in the right. And therefore I join not with those clergy or lay gentlemen, who damn all that are not of their mind and side, in differences of that nature.

I often hear some say that kings and states do all receive their authority from the body of the nation, who are the chief seat of it. So Hooker, so Laud, and indeed as aforesaid, so Heathen, Papist, and Protestant politicians ordinarily hold. I call not all these malignants, though I am fully satisfied, 1. That God is the Institutor of magistracy in general. 2. And that he hath so far specified it as to determine of its unchangeable essentials (that they shall as his officers promote obedience to the ten commandments). 3. And that he never gave this governing power to the people. 4. But that all that the people do is, 1. To specify it as to the number of persons (a monarchy, aristocracy, or mixed of these and some democracy). 2. To limit it by determining of the degrees of power, about property and liberty, and all things

which God's law hath left undetermined and mutable. 3. And to determine of the persons and families that shall receive the immutable power from God and the mutable from men.

I often hear some most magnify democracy, and some aristocracy, and some monarchy, and some a mixture; and some English clergymen are for a civil monarchy subject to a catholic clergy aristocracy. I call none malignants for any such differences.

I find some Papists and Protestants political writers saying, that when it proveth hurtful to the commonwealth, the people may retract the power given the prince, and change the government; and Hooker saith, no doubt in such a case a prince will part with it. And archbishop Laud, before cited, saith of the like, and abrogating laws, this power nobody collective, ecclesiastical or civil, can put out of itself and give away, and I find many that extol Hooker and Laud call this a principle of rebellion. It is neither of them that I call malignants.

I find most writers of politics agreed that the law of nature alloweth and commandeth kingdoms and commonwealths self-defence against any public enemies that seek to destroy them. And that no man on pretence of right to a crown hath any right to destroy the body of the people, or the 'bonum publicum' which is the essentiating end of government, nor can be 'simul rex et publicus hostis.' I hear others take this for an unchristian doctrine of rebellion, and say, that if a king would destroy all the people of a kingdom (in revenge, or in siding with another kingdom of his own or another's), they ought not to resist him, or any that he commissioneth to do it. And that if he should commission a few men to kill all the parliament as they sit, or to burn the city, it is rebellion to resist by self-defence. I hear lawyers themselves at great difference on such matters, some for more power, and some for less. I find the great defenders of monarchy, such as Barclay and Grotius de Jure Belli, naming many cases in which kings may be resisted, yea and forfeit all. And I find others among us of a contrary mind. Yea, I find the conformable and diocesan pillars quite differ in such cases. Bishop Bilson naming many cases in which resistance is no rebellion, 'To subject his kingdom to a foreign realm, or to change the form of the commonwealth from impery to tyranny, or neglect the laws established by

common consent of prince and people, to execute his own pleasure ; in these and other such cases which might be named, if the nobles and commons join together to defend their ancient and accustomed liberty, regiment, and laws, they may not well be counted rebels,' saith he, " of Obedience," page 520. But I hear many now say the contrary, and condemn such doctrine as disloyal.

I find some join with the Papists in accusing the Reformation as caused by rebellions in Germany, Geneva, France, Belgium, &c. And I find Bishop Jewel, Bilson, and other bishops defending the French defence, and Dr. Peter Moulin of Canterbury in his answer to Philanax Anglicus, contradicting their accusers, as false in point of history.

Abundance of such political controversies are now lately agitated, some charging their adversaries with rebellion, and some with tyranny. Some saying, they are guilty of treason against the king ; and others, they are traitors against the kingdom. And too ordinarily damning one another ; as if these matters were articles of our creed.

What a dismal difference is there now about those words in the declaration in the corporation act : ' There is no obligation on me or any other person, from the oath, called the Solemn League and Covenant. Some say there are none but rebels will refuse ; and that if any obligation had been granted to things lawful or necessary, some would have extended it to rebellion or schism. And therefore all obligation is to be renounced. Others say, that national perjury is a forerunner of national calamity or ruin ; and that where oaths bind not, there can be no trust ; and no trust, no commerce.' And they think as Dr. Sanderson, and Casuists, Papists, and Protestants do, that though an oath or vow be unlawfully imposed, and sinfully taken, and part of the matter of it be unlawful, and the imposers and takers are bound to repent, and no one is bound by it to the unlawful part, yet the taker is bound to that part of the matter which is lawful or necessary. And they take it to be lawful and necessary to repent of sin, to oppose profaneness, schism, heresy and popery, to defend the king, and therefore that it obligeth them to these.

I meddle not with the Roman opinion, that it is the Heretician heresy to say the kings have a power of investing bishops, and disobeying the pope's excommunication ; and of such as Cardinal Perron that dare not question or deny the

power of the pope, and councils to excommunicate and depose kings, because then they must condemn approved general councils, which are their religion itself, and (saith he) must grant that the pope is antichrist, and the church erroneous that hath so long used this.

I name all these political controversies,

1. To tell you that it is not factious and passionate enmity to each other on such accounts, which I mean by enmity to religion.

2. And to remember men, that if in so many and great points in politics and government, the learned and Christian world, have so great difference, what reason is there that we should damn or excommunicate, or hate each other about a hard opinion in religion, or a ceremony.

3. And to tell the popish church, that if it were a good argument that there must be one pretorian court or church to oblige all the world by an universal determination in what sense to expound the Scripture, because it is abused to error by men's mistake, and there must be an end of controversies; by the same reason there must be an universal pretorian court to expound all human laws, and end the controversies of lawyers; yea, and to master all men's reason; for Scripture is no more commonly controverted and abused than law itself; and not half so much as reason is, which is pleaded for almost all the falsehood and wickedness in the world.

Moreover it is not personal feuds between man and man that I mean by enmity to godliness. No; though any such be against an innocent and godly man, where it is not for his godliness, but some other difference.

I will say more, though some dislike it; it is not a Papist as such that I mean by a malignant enemy of godliness. I know that education, and temptation, and want of hearing the confutation of their errors judiciously made, may cause godly persons to think that the universal church must be united in some human head or sovereign power; and that there is no other way to end controversies and schisms, and that (as Dr. Saywell saith) there must be some over kingdoms or national churches, as well as over particular persons, that many may not escape while a few are punished. It is easy to be deceived by the pretences of unity and concord, while men see the divisions and discords of others.

And the false pretences of antiquity are so confidently uttered by their clergy, that men unacquainted with the history may verily believe them. And the plea for an uninterrupted succession of ministerial ordination, and that a superior must give power to the inferiors, deceiveth many. If there must be a Diocesan to ordain and rule all Presbyters, and a Metropolitan to ordain or rule the Diocesans, and a Patriarch to rule them, from whom shall the Patriarchs receive their power or commands, but from a Pope? The poor reasoning which the French now use with the Protestants, puzzleth unskilful persons; viz. Was there any church before your reformation? If yea, where was it? And had not you your ministerial power from it? It was Rome or none. And if it was the true church then, it is so now. We answer them, There was and is one only catholic church. Of this Christ only is the Head or universal Governor, and no man or men. Of this all lawful pastors are his official guides in their several provinces, as many justices and mayors of corporations under one king. That all these having one King (Jesus), and one law (of Christ), and one Spirit, and one faith and hope, are to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and to use synods when needful to that end, but not as a pretorian or regent aristocracy or court. That the church before Luther was all over the world where ever there were Christians. In Ethiopia, Egypt, Syria, Armenia, Georgia, Circassia, Asia, and wherever the Greek Christianity is in Muscovy, and in all Europe where there were true Christians. That the envious man having sowed tares, this church is unhappily fallen into many corruptions, diseases, and factious sects, almost all censuring one another. No part of it is perfect. That the papal part is in doctrine, worship, and government, one of the most corrupted parts! Yet so far as their diseases or errors nullify not their profession of Christianity, they are parts, though leprous. And therefore though they are the most uncharitable and schismatical part, as they cut off or unchurch all the Christian world save themselves, yet being as Christians united to the rest in the common faith, their baptism and ordinations are not nullities as they invest men in the Christian society and Christian ministry: though that part of them is a nullity which engageth men in schism and in sin. That the ministerial pow-

er is not the gift of man, but only of Christ, who by the charter of his recorded word, giveth the power and the obligation to that person who is duly chosen and called thereto. As the king's charter giveth the power to the mayor of a corporation duly qualified and chosen. That the ordainers are but partly judges of the qualification, and partly ministerial investors, and not at all the donors of the power. That ordination is for order sake needful, when it may be had, to keep men from being judges of their own sufficiency. But order being only for the thing ordered (as the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath), is not necessary against the end. That there is no necessity that a superior must ordain. But as the College of physicians, philosophers, &c. make physicians and philosophers, as approved, so may equals in the ministry. Do not bishops make or consecrate bishops. If this were not so, who makes the pope? If he did not pretend that his power is given him immediately from Christ, he must grant that there are some men above him to give it him, and so he is not the sovereign. If they say that the power of popes (and kings) is given by the whole body (the church), he is then no pope. For it is known that three parts of the Christian world are against him. If he will say, none are the church but those that are his party, any sect or rebels may say the like, and appropriate authority to themselves.

Nothing more cheateth the ignorant, than ambiguous words and confusion. And explaining those words, and needful, plain distinction, would save the writing of many volumes, and would make truth easily meet the seeker, and unravel all the spider webs of deceivers.

Do but well use these few distinctions, and all popery vanisheth into smoke: 1. Distinguish between a catholic church as headed by Christ (this we are all members of), and a pretended catholic church, headed by the pope or any men. This is another church as to the denominating form, having another informing, unifying head. And this is it which we deny.

Distinguish visibility. Christ's church is so far visible as to have a Head who was visible on earth, is visible in heaven, and will visibly come to judgment, and visibly reign for ever. It hath visible laws, protection, and officers. The

subjects' bodies and their profession are visible; and it is not farther visible; no, not as to the souls or real faith of the subjects. The Papist's church hath an usurping, visible, human head on earth.

3. Distinguish of baptism and ordination as into Christ's catholic church, and done by Papists as Christians: and as into the pope's catholic church and done by Papists as Papists.

4. Distinguish of subjection and communion. We owe communion when we owe no subjection, and where men have no right to be our governors.

5. Distinguish between communion in Christianity, and that in essentials, integrals, or accidents; and communion in errors and corruptions, or defects. We have communion with Papists and all Christians in Christianity (if they be Christians indeed). But we renounce communion to the errors and sins of them and all others, as far as we are able to avoid them. All Christians have union and communion in the essentials of Christianity. No Christians have union and communion in all the integrals (on earth), all being imperfect. But the more such union and communion the better. No Christians have, or ought to have, communion in all the accidents. All should avoid communion in sin.

6. Distinguish between communion of hearts, communion of profession, and communion in local presence. We have heart communion in one essential faith, hope, and love, with all true Christians on earth. We profess all one faith in the essentials. We have nearer communion, or fuller with the reformed churches which are soundest in the integrals, than we have with the more faulty and corrupt. But we have local presence but in one place at once; and we ought to avoid local presence where we cannot have it without sin, though we have communion in faith, love, and profession with the same men. If a reformed church will not admit our local presence without subscribing some one untruth, we must be absent, when we may be present with a worse church which excludeth us not by any such imposition.

7. Accordingly distinguish of separation. We separate not at all from union or communion with Papists as they are Christians, or as they hold any truth. But, 1. We separate from subjection and obedience to them, which we never ow-

ed them, or any other church. 2. We separate from communion with their church, as it is a policy informed by an usurping human king or head. 3. We separate from all their sins so far as we know them. 4. We deny local presence in their mass-worship, because of the sin imposed on us, both before it and in it. 5. We are incapable of communion in all accidents, or mutable indifferent things.

Understand and use well these few plain distinctions, and you need little more to answer all the Papists.

And I fear not to add, that were the Papists in my power (as I never did), I never would use any inhumanity or cruelty towards them; yea, I would use no offensive, but only defensive force against them; nor hurt one of them, further than they made it necessary for the defence of the land, or those whom they would hurt.

I knew not till a book called the "Liberties of England" lately told me, how many very severe laws are against them. I am no judge of the times that they were made in, nor of their occasions. But I think that of late they have done more hurt than good. For, 1. Some of them seem too severe. 2. Some I cannot prove to be justifiable; viz. Those which would compel them to come to our sacramental communion, when many a good minister would not receive them if they came. And that which excommunicateth them that never were of our communion. And that which layeth the excommunicate as such in prison, &c. 3. It greatly tendeth to misinform foreigners, who seeing these laws, think they are all put in execution; and so believe those that tell them, that the catholics here are under constant cruelties, and frequent martyrdoms; whereas I never in all my life knew of one Papist that suffered so much for his religion, as I have done myself, within these few years past, though my sufferings are so small as to be no mete matter of very great complaint. 4. These laws being a continual danger to them (should there be governors that would execute them) doth put them on continual plotting and striving against them. Sufferings, or great dangers, put men by fear upon self-defence, and the utmost endeavours for deliverance, who would be more quiet if they found themselves in safety; and though their clergy would be still plotting the recovery of the papal power, to subject king and kingdom to the sacred

king of Rome, yet the laity would be less against the common peace, when they found that it was their own peace.

I have told you what I mean not by malignant enmity to godliness. I tell you now what I mean by it; viz.

When the blindness and ungodliness of corrupted nature, increased by practice into serpentine enmity, and turning men's hearts by unbelief and disaffection from God and heaven, doth possess them with a deep dislike of a holy, heavenly, and spiritual life; first as to their own practices, and then as it is in others; and because it is against their worldly hopes, and fleshly lusts, they hate it, and reject it themselves, and then hate and maliciously oppose it in others; yea, though law, custom, and worldly interest draw them formally to profess Christianity and obedience to God's laws, and to vow that in baptism they hate the serious performance of their own profession and vows; and would be glad to drive it out of the world, and to set up hypocrisy and ceremony, or a stage religion and mummary, or the toothless mass and formalities in its stead. And if custom or shame hinder them from persecuting or scorning truth and godliness in its proper name, they will shew their mind by these things following:

1. They will set up some worldly, fleshly interest (like the papal kingdom) which is contrary to the Christian and holy interest; and then they will persecute Christians, not as Christians, nor as godly in name, but as such indeed by pleading conscience and obedience to God, against their inconsistent interest and ways.

2. Among all that are against their carnal, false interest, they will cull out the more serious godly persons to afflict.

3. Among all the faithful, they will cull out those who do Christ more service in the world; because Christ's service is it that is their disservice, and opposite to their sin.

4. They will make a scorn of their very religious duties, and take up mimical derisions, to make them ridiculous or contemptible.

5. When they can charge them with no crimes, they will purposely make nets to catch them, as the enemies of Daniel did by him; Dan. vi. And as the spider makes her curious webs to catch and kill the flies.

6. Yea, they will make faults by slander and lies, if not by perjuries, if they can find none.

7. Yea, their virtue, piety, and innocence shall be all called hypocrisy ; and when they cannot accuse their actions, they will accuse their hearts and secret thoughts, and judge them as if they had a casement into their breasts.

8. Yea, if their innocency cannot be so stained, they will hate them so much the more, because they cannot tread down their reputation.

9. They will search after, and aggravate all the failings of religious people, and turn them into crimes.

10. If any one of them, or a hypocrite that is like them, be guilty of any notable fall, they will persuade men that all the rest of their lives is like that crime : yea, and that all that profess much seriousness in godliness, are as bad as they : that all the rest of the life of Noah, Lot, David, Solomon, &c. was as bad as the criminal part ; and that all the servants of Christ are Peters or Judases.

11. That it is not their sins, but their piety which they hate, you will see in that they live in far greater sin themselves, and take it to be no great harm, but hate those that reprove them.

12. And they make light of the common crimes of others. They can bear with an atheist, an infidel, a drunkard, a profane swearer, a derider of godliness ; yea, a persecutor, a fornicator, a man of no religion, if he will but be for them, and serve their interest, and will not scruple communion with such. But men never so sober, just, and godly, that cross their wills and carnal ways, they cannot endure. And if they be such clergymen, as the world hath too many, such serious, godly men, for disliking their ungodliness, are made the common objects of their pulpit and discoursing scorn or accusations, and perhaps are excommunicate 'ipso facto,' for dissenting from their opinions or wills.

13. Such usually in former ages have been the chief instigators of princes and rulers, to hate men of serious religion, and to stir up persecution against them, and to render such odious to the world as heretics or intolerable villains. O what difference is there between the true narratives of the lives of Luther, Calvin, Beza, and abundance such, and the odious lies, and defamations written of them by some others. Yea, those who commend Melancthon, Bucer, and many such for learning and moderation, hate their doctrine of reformation and serious piety.

14. And you may note, that in any slander of a godly man, they will sooner believe one or two ignorant malicious drunkards against them, that never knew them, than the testimonies of hundreds of most faithful persons who praise and vindicate them, though they better knew them.

15. They seldom give the accused leave to speak for themselves before they believe accusations against them ; but conclude that they are as bad as backbiting malice reporteth them behind their backs.

16. They are glad to hear of any infamy of religious persons, and loath to hear them praised without contradiction ; and are glad to hear of any suffering that befalls them.

17. If there be any public differences in a church, city or land, they are usually against that side, which most favoureth serious godliness, be they who they will. If the king, parliament, bishops, will be for the persons and ways of soberness, justice, and serious godliness, they will be on the other side ; and they will cry up any that will cry them down, or would oppress them.

18. Lastly, The quality of the enemies may help with the rest to tell what it is that they are against ; when it is the generality of the worldlings, proud, ambitious men, sensual drunkards, gluttons, fornicators, profane and irreligious, who hate godliness so far as to drive it from themselves and families, and rather venture on hellfire, than be truly godly ; it is easy to know what these hate in others.

I have told you who I mean by malignant enemies of godliness, that the mistakers and slanderers of my words may have no excuse. Could we now but prevail against this Cainism, or devilism, it would do much to recover the peace of many nations of the earth : but Christ hath told us, that enmity between the seed of the woman and the serpent, of which Cain and Abel were the first specimen since the fall, will never cease till Christ come, as is terribly described, 2 Thess. i. 6. 10—12. and Matt. xxv. But yet some Sauls may become Pauls, and for the hope of the recovery of such, I will adjoin such reasons as should convince any that have the use of reason left.

CHAPTER III.

Undeniable Reasons against Malignant Enmity to Serious Godliness.

1. To deny that there is a God who is the Supreme Governor of man, is to be mad in despite of the whole world which proveth it: and it deposeth all kings, who claim their authority as given them by God, and as his officers; for if there be no God, there is none to give them authority: and to grant that there is a God, and yet deny him our love, honour and obedience, is to speak gross contradiction, or else profess open malice against God himself. If he be God, he is perfectly wise; and should not perfect wisdom govern us? If he be God, he is perfectly good, and man's chief benefactor; and should he not then have our chiefest love? If he be God, he is of absolute power; and should he not then be obeyed? If he be God, he made us, and still maintaineth us, and we live continually by his will, and have all that we have of his bounty, and we, and all we have are wholly his own; and are not then all our thanks and service due to him? If he be God, he is our Judge, and will be just in punishing and rewarding; and should we not then serve him with the greatest fear, and with the highest hopes? These things are undeniable.

Dare any man that believeth there is a God, say, that man can love him too much, or too much honour him or obey him? Can we return him more than his due? It is therefore no less than practical atheism, or else a rebellious defiance of God, to blame or hate men for loving, honouring and serving him to the very utmost of their power. And to deny God, or defy him, is a thousandfold more damnable sin and treason, than to deny and defy the king, or your own parents.

2. God hath himself commanded man to love him with all his heart, and soul, and might; and to obey him with his greatest fidelity and diligence, and to fear him more than any creature, and to place our chiefest hopes on his promised rewards, and to seek first his kingdom and righteousness, and not to sin wilfully to save our lives, or gain all the

world ; Deut. vi. 5—7. xx. 12. xi. 12—14. Matt. xxii. 37. Heb. xi. 6. 1 Cor. xv. 58. Luke xi. 4. Heb. xii. 28, 29. Matt. x. 39. 42. xvi. 25. 16. vi. 33. Luke xiv. 26. 33. Matt. v. 19, 20. And the law of nature speaks no less. And if God command it, and you condemn it, do you not condemn God ? If you command your son, or servant, or subject any thing, he that blames him for obeying you, blames you more than him. If it be a fault or folly to love and serve God with all our heart, and mind, and might, the fault or folly would be God's that requireth it, and not ours. And, is such a blasphemer fit for human society, who will accuse his Maker ? If God be blameworthy, he is not perfect ; and if he be not perfect, he is not God : and so to be against our utmost obedience, doth amount to no less than blasphemy or atheism.

3. Do you think that man is a creature that needs to be blamed for loving or obeying God too much ? Do you not know that nature is vitiated by sin, and man is now backward to God, and all that is good and holy ? You may as well blame a lame man for running too fast, as a sinful man for obeying God too much. It is more foolish than to blame a sick man for working or eating too much, that can do neither : or to hold a man in a consumption from going up the hill too fast. Do you find your own heart so forward to a holy life, as that you need pulling back or hindrance, when no exhortation or necessity will persuade you to it ? And if you need no such reproof or stop, why should you think others need it ? Do you not use to say that all men are sinners ? And do sinners need to be blamed for obedience ? Do you not daily confess that you have done the things which you ought not to have done, and left undone the things that you ought to have done, and there is no health in you ; and yet will you blame men for too much obedience ? It seems then, that your confessions of sin are professions of it ; and while you tell what you have done, you do but tell what you mean to do, and what you would have all others do ; or else you blame yourselves for sinning, and hate your neighbours for not sinning.

4. If you hate men for holiness and avoiding sin, you hate Jesus Christ most ; for he was most holy, and free from all sin : and you hate the angels and all in heaven, for they are holy, and void of all transgression.

5. Have you any better master to serve than God? Or any better work to do than he commandeth, or any better thing to seek and hope for than he hath promised? If not, should not the best be preferred? What do you love and seek yourselves? Is money or fleshly pleasure better than God and heaven? Is sin and sensuality a better employment than his service? Is your flesh and lust a better master? Compare them, and we are content that the best be preferred.

6. Why do you take on you to believe in Christ, if you be against holiness, and for sin? Christ came into the world to die for sin, to shew God's hatred of it: and would you have us wilfully commit it, and to despise his blood? He came to destroy the works of the devil; and will you plead for them? He came by his doctrine, example and grace, to bring man to holy obedience; and do you hate men for the same, and yet call yourselves Christians?

7. How dangerously do you draw towards the sin against the Holy Ghost, if you hate or blame men for being holy, or seeking to be such; when it is all the work of the Holy Ghost on men's souls to make them holy? It is a dangerous thing to hate the work of the Holy Ghost, and as it were defy him, and do despite to him.

8. Are you not yourselves in your baptism vowed and devoted to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, renouncing the world, the flesh and the devil? And do you hate men for being such as you vowed to be yourselves? And do you think that God will not severely reckon with you for such perjury and base perfidiousness?

9. Do you not in your daily hypocritical devotions condemn yourselves by your own tongues? Do you not pray that the rest of your lives may be pure and holy? And at the same time hate purity and holiness? Do you not pray that God's will may be done on earth as it is in heaven? And can we have a higher, purer pattern? Do you know any that doth God's will better than it is done in heaven? Or is it not damnable hypocrisy to pray for that which you hate, and hate all men that desire and endeavour it? When you say or hear all the ten commandments, you pray, "Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law:" and do you hate men for endeavouring to keep it? If you come to the Lord's table, you confess your sins, and bind

yourselves in covenant to forsake them, and to live a holy life, and you take the sacrament upon it; and the liturgy warneth you to take heed that you dissemble not, nor be hinderers of God's holy word, lest the devil enter into you as he did into Judas, and fill you with all unrighteousness. And if you hate or oppose that holy obedience to God which you profess, after all this, what must be the portion of such hypocrites? And in your creed you profess to believe in God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and to hold a holy catholic church, and the communion of saints; and yet do you hate saints that obey the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and hate their communion?

10. Hath not God printed on man's nature such a sense of the difference between good and evil, as that all laws and government are founded in that sense? And no man loveth to be counted or called a bad, or ungodly, or unconscionable man; a liar, a knave, a perjured man, or a wicked man; and yet do you hate men for avoiding wickedness?

11. Do not you use to accuse religious men of some sin or other (truly or falsely), and think by that to make them odious? And yet do you accuse them, and hate them most for not sinning? To be sober, just and godly, is but to avoid sins of omission and commission; and do you at once accuse them as sinners, and hate them for obeying God, and sinning no more?

12. Doth it never affright you to find the devil's nature in you, as hating the divine or holy nature which is in faithful, godly men, and to think how openly you serve the devil, and do his work? No man that believeth there are devils, can doubt, but that the hatred of God as holy, and the hatred of his holy word, and work, and servants, is the devil's malignity, and the opposing of them his work. If he were to write you his commandments, they would be contrary to God's, and the chief of them should be, 'Thou shalt not love God, nor serve him with all thy heart, and soul, and might, nor love them that do so; but hate, deride, oppose, and persecute them.' And is it honourable openly to serve the devil? Christ tells such men, John viii., that the devil is their father, because they have his nature, and that his work they do, for he was from the beginning a liar, and a malignant murderer, and turned man from obeying God;

and can you think that he loveth you, or that his service against God is better than God's ; or his reward better ?

13. Doth it never touch your consciences to consider that you are the children and followers of cursed Cain ; and how punctually his case against Abel, and yours against God's servants is the same ? By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts ; and by it he being dead, yet speaketh ; Heb. xi. 4. Cain hated him because God more accepted him and his offering. " In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil : whoever doth not righteousness is not of God, nor he that loveth not his brother : for this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another : not as Cain, who was that wicked one, and slew his brother : and wherefore slew he him ? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous ;" 1 John iii. 10—12.

14. Is it possible that any man can unfeignedly believe a heaven as the reward of holy obedience, and yet think we can do too much to obtain it, or be too careful to make it sure ? Is not everlasting glory worth the cost of a holy life, or can it be too dearly bought ?

15. Or is it possible to believe God's judgment, and hell's punishment, and yet to hate those that do their best according to God's own counsel to escape it ?

16. What monstrous cruelty is it in you to wish poor souls to do that which God hath told us they shall be damned for ! God saith, " Without holiness none shall see God ;" Heb. xii. 14. " Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven ;" Matt. v. 20. " Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God ;" Matt. v. 8. " If ye live after the flesh ye shall die, but if by the Spirit ye mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live ;" Rom. viii. 7, 8. 13. " What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness ?" 2 Pet. iii. 11. " We receiving a kingdom that cannot be moved, let us serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire ;" Heb. xii. 28, 29. " Be stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord : " 1 Cor. xv. 58. This is the very tenor of the Gospel : and

would you wish men to damn their souls for nothing? To lose heaven, and suffer in hell for ever, and all to avoid a pure and holy life? What a bloody motion is this; worse than if you entreated us all to cut our own throats! Let us try first whether you will do far less at our request. Will you give the poor all your lands and estates? Will you run into fire or water, or set your houses on fire, when any will but desire it? It is like you have heard of the woman who being tempted to adultery, desired the tempter first to hold his finger in the fire for her; which, when he refused, she told him it was less reason she should burn in hell to satisfy his lust. If you will not part with your life or estate when another desires you, why should we part with heaven for ever, and choose hell at your desire?

Yea, we see that you will not leave an ill-gotten gain, or a sport, or a whore, or a drunken cup, for all the love of God, the blood of Christ, and the hope of heaven; and shall we part with God, and heaven, and Christ, to humour you?

And what is it that you offer us instead of all that we must part with, and to ease the pain that we must undergo? Nothing, or worse than nothing. If we should renounce God and our hope of heaven, you cannot give us health or wealth for it; much less can you secure these or life to us till to-morrow. And will any thing that you can give us, be better than heaven to us, or will it make hell tolerable?

Will you undertake to answer for it at the bar of God, if we are charged with an ungodly, fleshly life, or omitting our necessary duty? You cannot answer for yourselves but by trembling confession: you cannot save yourselves; nor will all your wealth and honour get you one drop of water to cool your tongues. And shall we trust that you can answer for us, or save us? When you would have any man wilfully to neglect that holy life which God enjoineth, you would have him to be madder than one that would burn his house, and kill himself, if you did but require it: and what horrid cruelty is this! You are worse than man-eating cannibals! But the best is, you cannot force us to it; and if you think to hire or flatter us into hell, you must have somewhat more to say and to offer us than we yet ever heard of; much less are we so much below bedlams, as to forsake our salvation, lest you should call us Precisians, or Puritans, or any such nickname or word of scorn, as doth but shew the folly and

misery of the speaker. You will not be laughed or mocked out of your estates or lives ; nor we out of our salvation. In short, nature is not willing to lie in hell, and grace maketh us desire heaven ; and we never yet found that any thing else was more desirable.

17. And what is there amiss in the word or work of God, and in a serious, godly life, that should make us be against it? Doth God make bad laws? Are your wills, and lusts, and appetites a better law? Or could you have taught God to amend the Bible, or to govern better? God needs us not : his laws are all made for our good. All his ways are pleasantness, and all his paths are peace. Speak true reason. Is it a better life to love a whore, or to please lust and appetite, than to love God? What is there in love and obedience to God that should make it detestable, or make us miserable? Is it a greater trouble to live in hope of heavenly glory, than to live in the despair either of a Sadducee or a rebel? You may more wisely tempt us to fall out with our food, or friends, or health. We know that faith and godliness, are not only man's duty, but his interest, much more than health is to our bodies, food to our natures, and the converse of dearest friends to our delight.

18. We have had experience of both ways, and would you have us mad against our experience? We tried the world and sin too long, and found nothing in it but brutish pleasure and luscious poison : nothing that will save soul, life or health : and some trial God in mercy hath given us of his love, and the life of obedience, faith and hope : and the more we try it, the better we find it : only we can reach to so small a degree as doth but tell us how good it is, and make us long for more. And whether the devil would persuade, scorn or affright us from it, by his own mouth or by yours, we hope it shall be all in vain.

19. And who or what are you that would reason, mock or affright us from a life of obedience to God? Are you wiser than God, and dare you give him the lie, that we should believe you before him? Or are you better than God, that you can make a better choice for yourselves and us? Are you more merciful than God, and would save us from some hurt that he would do us? Are you truer than God, and more to be believed? Are you greater than God, and more to be feared? Or are you not the most foolish, igno-

rant and damnably yourselves deluded by the devil? And shall the words or mocks of such, drive us to forsake our souls and God? Should we obey you and lie in hell for it for ever, it would be no small part of the torment of our consciences, to think that we came thither by regarding the threats or scorns of worms and fools before all the word and love of God and our Redeemer.

20. And before we change our obedience to God for another course, let us know what we shall change it for, and whether it be for something better: hath your course made you better or happier than the faithful are? Do we not see and feel with sorrow, that the worldly, fleshly, ungodly sort, are in all nations the plagues of the earth, and worse to mankind than wolves and serpents? They will not let the world live in peace; striving and fighting for dominion and mastership, and more of the world, they are like dogs about their carrion, worrying and tearing one another: they turn man into a more odious creature than swine or toads, by filthy lusts, and horrid profaneness: they make their countries worse than Bedlam, raving against that which the God of heaven hath commanded and made necessary to salvation. And are these such good and pleasant fruits as should entice us to change our master, work and hopes, for this, and worse that followeth it?

And who shall be our rule, if we forsake God and his word? If princes, how many minds are they of through the world; and are they all in the right? or how shall we know which is right but by the word of God? or must all men be for the God and religion of his king? If it were prelates, of how many minds are they through the world, and how bitter in condemning one another! If it must be the major part, how shall obscure men know who those be that can have no just cognizance of the state of the earth, whether Papists, Greeks, Jacobites, Nestorians, &c. be the major part? And how shall we know that the major part of the clergy are the best and soundest, when we see that the major part of the laity is usually the worst; or is it certain that the Papist bishops are sounder than our Protestant bishops, because they are more? If we forsake our concord in God and his word, we can have none.

What mean you to do with conscience, your own, and ours, and other men's? Conscience is God's offi-

cer in us, and judgeth of men and actions as they stand subject to God and his judgment. To drive conscience out of the world, and to drive all reverence and obedience to God out of the world, is all one. To subject conscience to lust or man, is to subject God to lust or man in our estimation and practice. And is God so easily deposed? and will he give up his sceptre to a scorner, a drunkard, or a persecutor?

And what shift will you make at home to quiet conscience in yourselves? You little know how deep it biteth, and how hardly it is quieted, when it is awaked, as shortly and certainly it will be: then Judas will bring back his price, and say, "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood;" and all the comfort his companions will give him is, "See thou to that: what is that to us?" And hanging or precipitating himself is the next. It is like he before thought as you do, that he could have better mastered his conscience: but you may as wisely think to conquer pain and death.

But whatever you do with your own, if we should leave our obedience to God, to obey you or any men, we know not what we should do with our own consciences, nor how to quiet them. God hath brought us out of the darkness and lethargy which quieted them in sin heretofore: and we cannot now be ignorant of that duty to God, that self-interest, that danger to wilful sinners, and that evil of sin, which would begin hell in us here: and are not your scorns and threatenings easier than this?

22. Do not most men at death see the madness not only of enmity, but of neglect of a holy life, and wish that they might die the death of the righteous, and that their last end might be like his? Had you rather die a Dives or a Herod, or a Lazarus or a Paul? Is it not a shame to your devilish cause and you, to see men live in one mind and die in another? And scorn, hate and persecute serious godliness till the sentence of death is past upon them, and then to wish they were such themselves? Or if you be more hardened to the last, you are the more hopeful; but how quickly did such another change his note, and cry, "Father Abraham, send one to my five brethren to warn them, that they come not to the place of torment!" If you mock at these words, you mock at Christ that spake them, and sure you look not to be saved by a derided Christ. And it is base hypocrisy

to deride him, and yet call yourselves Christians, and go to church as if you served him. Live as you would die and be judged, for you shall be judged as you live and die. Either hold to the mind that you will never change, or change it quickly before it be too late.

23. If you know what a man is, you know that his soul is better than his corruptible flesh; and if you think your throats, and guts, and fancies worth all the cost, and care, and labour, which you bestow on them in the world, shall not we think our souls worth more? What godly man that you think makes too much ado for heaven, doth bestow more time, and words, and labour for it, than you do for the flesh and world? Do we not see how men will labour at land, and venture through dangerous seas, and fight in wars, and plot against all that stand in their way, and this is all day, from year to year, and all for provision for flesh and fancy. And do those that you accuse do more for their salvation? If you know not now, you will shortly know, which makes the better choice and bargain.

24. What harm doth godliness and conscience do you in other men? Had you not rather have a son that takes disobedience, whoredom, gaming and drunkenness for sin, than one that makes no conscience of them? Had you not rather have a wife whose conscience restrains her from scolding and adultery, and a servant that makes conscience of robbing or deceiving you, than one that doth not? Sure unconscionable servants and debtors are more troublesome than they that fear God and believe that injustice is a damning sin. But the truth is, most wicked men are for so much conscience and religion in others, as restrains them from wronging or hurting them, but no more, nor for that much in themselves which may restrain them from hurting others.

But if you resolve rather to be damned than to be sober, just and godly, and obey God against the flesh; why cannot you bear with other men that make a wiser choice? What hurt doth their praying do you, or their preaching, while they are responsible for any ill doctrine? What if they be reading the Scripture, or hearing directions for a holy life, while you are drinking, or gaming, or reading a romance, or railing libel, doth their piety hurt you? What if they dare not swear and drink as you do, doth this do you any

harm? What is it but the serpentine enmity that maketh you hate those that never hurt you?

25. If you will believe God, it is for the sake of godly men that God preserves the world from ruin; he would have saved Sodom had there been but ten such persons in it; he will not destroy the world, till he hath gathered all his chosen out of it; and do they deserve to be most hated?

26. How exceeding dear a love hath God and our Redeemer expressed, to all holy, obedient believers! God calls them his jewels, his treasure, in whom he delighteth; he gave Christ especially for them. He sealeth them to salvation by his Spirit. He justifieth them, and will glorify them in heaven. Christ calls them flesh of his flesh, his friends, his spouse, they are united to him, he washeth them in his blood, and feedeth them with his flesh, and will make them equal to the angels, which will condemn their enemies. And are not you devilish enemies to God and Christ, who cull out those for your malice and enmity, whom God chooseth out to magnify the wonders of his love on them for ever?

27. The angels of heaven rejoice at the conversion of a sinner; Luke xv. 10. And rejoice to be Christ's servants for their defence continually: and is it not devils then and their servants and soldiers that are against them? Take heed; God's angels that smote a Herod, may do execution on you ere long.

28. The Holy Ghost saith, (1 Cor. vi.) that the saints shall judge the world, and even the angels, that is, the evil ones. Did you believe this, you would be afraid to hate and persecute them now.

29. Even heathens are for much honouring and worshipping their gods; yea many offer them too costly sacrifice. What praises doth Julian give to the sun, and what strictness of life doth he command his priests! What great contempt of the body and the world did the Platonists, the Stoics and the Cynics profess! And shall professed Christians hate those that are obedient to the true God? Yea, to shew that the war between good and evil goeth on in all the world; even among heathens those that were for true virtue were despised and hated by the sensual.

30. And is it not a self-condemning thing in those that accuse God's servants as making too much ado in obeying the law of God, and yet make (as the church of Rome doth)

abundance more laws or canons of their own, and require precise obedience to them all? Yea, will burn men at a stake for breaking their laws? Doth God make too much work in the judgment of them that think it not enough without much more, as if God's law were too narrow and insufficient? Yea, learn by the church of England, whose canons (5—8.) 'ipso facto,' excommunicate them that do but affirm any thing to be repugnant to God's word in their liturgy, ceremonies or church-governing offices. And can you think that obeying God deserveth hatred, when disobeying men deserveth excommunication? Learn of our late laws, which account all the ministers of England worthy to be cast out and silenced if they dare not take the imposed declarations, oaths and subscriptions, and do what the act of uniformity imposeth; and do you think it worthy of reproach to be as strict in obeying God's known laws, as is required to the act of uniformity and the canons?

31. Even the church of Rome applaudeth great rigor and strictness of life, in such as will obey the pope; and they have allowed orders of friars whose rulers tie them to great abstinence, to much praying, and some to much preaching, so that religion is all their calling. And shall the strict obeying of God's known laws render men odious among professed Protestants? Yea, the Papists honour the very bones and relics of their dead saints. And you yourselves keep holydays for many saints: and will you at the same time hate and hurt those that endeavour to imitate them? Will you imitate those Pharisees whom Christ pronounceth woe against, who at once honoured the dead prophets with building monuments or tombs, and murdered the living that succeeded them?

32. You can never come to heaven, or be saved from hell yourselves, without serious holiness, justice and sobriety: and will you hate that without which you cannot be saved?

33. Scarce any sin doth more certainly prove you to be ungodly, than hating godliness: whatever hope there may be of those that sin against conscience, and wish to be better, and purpose repentance, that man cannot be a truly godly man, that is an enemy to godliness, so that this is a dreadful death's mark on you.

34. You would extirpate the principle of self-love, which God hath made inseparable from us. There is somewhat in

our nature which we cannot lay by, which makes us unwilling to be damned. If you that believe no hell, dare venture into it, we cannot do so who do believe it. If you say that it is our folly to believe that none shall be saved without holiness, and mortifying the deeds of the body by the Spirit, bear with that folly which doth you no harm : it is not men or devils that we had it from, but the Holy Ghost in Scripture. If it be your wisdom to give God the lie, and believe a drunken sot, or the devil, before him, it shall be none of ours. Speed as you choose, and let us speed as we choose. We shall meet your souls shortly in another mind and tune. Strive not to make us choose damnation now our eyes are open : we were once too easily befooled ; but cannot now so hate ourselves.

35. Moreover, he that would not have a man live a life of holy obedience to God, would have him lay by that which he was made for, and that which God continueth his life for, and that which he hath his reason and all his daily mercies for. What else have we to do in the world? Have men going to the grave and eternity nothing to do but eat and drink, and laugh, and play, and run up and down like ants with sticks and straws, and then die, and call all vanity and vexation too late? If we may not spend our time in making sure of a better world, we had rather we had never been born, or had died in infancy, or that we had a dose of opium that would make us sleep out the rest of our lives in quietness, rather than spend it as you do, and then give a sad account of all. We had rather we had been birds or beasts, dogs or swine than men, were it not for that life which you hate, and the hopes which depend on it. It had been a greater kindness to us to have murdered us at the birth, than to tempt us to live for our damnation.

36. What do you think it is that is God's image on man's soul, you know that it is said in Scripture that God made man at first in his own image, and that Christ by his Spirit reneweth them to that image. What is it think you? God hath not hands, and feet, and bodily parts as we have: it is the soul that hath his image. And do you think it is the love of money, and lust, and sport, or gluttony, or drunkenness that is his image? Scripture saith, (Ephes. iv. 23, 24. Col. iii. 10.) it is holiness ; and this is called the Divine nature, as coming from God, and inclining nature unto God. Either holiness, wisdom and righteousness are God's image,

or else there is none such on man ; and then you make God's word to be false. And if this be it, and this it which you hate, are not you haters of God ? And is not that to be devilish and hated by God ?

37. While you are angry at them that say few are saved, or that none but saints or serious, godly, obedient men are saved, you would sink all the world into utter despair, and make none or next to none to be saved. One part of the haters of godliness believe no life to come ; and these would have all men despair. For if there be none, there is none to be hoped for : and they that think men die but as dogs and swine do, must be expected to live like dogs and swine. The other part of you, labour by all means to make themselves and others believe that the profession of more godliness than worldly, carnal men have, is but hypocrisy, and that such are at the heart as bad as others ; and if this be so, what is the consequence, but that none are saved ? For unless you will give God the lie, or be saved in spite of him, you must believe that none are saved that are not sanctified by the Spirit of Christ, and live not after the Spirit, mortifying the flesh ; John iii. 3. 5. Heb. xii. 14. Rom. viii. 6—9. 13. 2 Cor. v. 17. And that no man can be saved that loveth the world more than God and heaven, and fleshly pleasure more than holiness. And therefore if there be none such, then none are saved. Hypocrisy will not save men : God tells us that drunkards, fornicators, covetous, thieves, extortioners, revilers, effeminate, idolaters, cannot enter into the kingdom of God ; 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. Ephes. v. 5. “ And if any man love the world (best) the love of the Father is not in him ;” 1 John ii. 5. And if all that pretend to be better are hypocrites, then none at all are saved.

It may be you have the kindness to except some few. But if those few be all that be not either carnal men, (described Rom. viii. 5—7. 9.) or hypocrites, how few then do you make to be saved, if God be true ?

38. Who do you think it is that Christ meaneth, when he saith, “ I send you as lambs among wolves ? Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. Blessed are they that suffer persecution for righteousness' sake. When they say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. The world will hate you as it hated me, because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. Marvel

not if the world hate you. As many as will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution," &c. Who do you think all this is spoken of? It is not of you that are fleshly worldly, ungodly men. Who persecuteth you for righteousness' sake? Who hateth, revileth, or imprisoneth, or fineth you, for living godly in Christ Jesus? Do you suffer as much for reviling preachers, as we have done for preaching? What suffer you for all the oaths that be sworn daily in the streets and taverns, and the horrid profaneness, atheism, Sadduceeism, infidelity, that men are guilty of? If you did suffer for whoredom, drunkenness, or blasphemy is that for Christ or righteousness? When the Holy Ghost saith, "as he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now;" it is such as you that he meaneth. When Peter saith, "They speak evil of you, and falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ;" (1 Pet. iii. 16.) whom meaneth he? When he saith, (1 Pet. iv.) "they think it strange that you run not with them to all excess of riot, lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatry," who do you think he meaneth? And when he saith, (1 Pet. ii. 9.) "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him that hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;" who is it that he meaneth? You will say, it is Christians: true: but is it hypocrites? Is it those that will say at last, Lord we have prophesied in thy name, and eat and drunk in thy presence, to whom Christ will say, Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, I know you not? Sure false Christians are worse than heathens.

39. The way which you take against religious persons doth shew who it is that sets you on work, and what it is that is the root of your enmity. As God's image is in the understanding, will, and executive power of man, so is satan's; and he is accordingly described by Christ to be 1. A liar and deceiver. 2. A malignant, hater of goodness or holiness, and a cause of sin. 3. A hurtful murderer or destroyer. And these are the three ways by which godly people are prosecuted in the world. 1. Belying them is grown so common with their enemies, that there is nothing scarcely so notoriously false which they will not affirm of them, and it is well if some will not preach it, print it, or swear it:

and they make one another easily believe it. Till experience proved it, I did not think that human nature had been liable to such impudent, monstrous lying.

2. The daily business of many is, by wit and diligence to draw men to hate religious men on false pretences. As plainly as Christ preacheth and urgeth love, as his great commandment; so plainly do these press and urge men to hatred: but of this before.

3. And hatred tends to hurtfulness. What plotting and labouring is there in the world, to ruin and destroy each other! The malignant spirit is bloodthirsty. It is strange how the unclean devils thirst to draw or suck some blood from witches. Nothing more alienates me from the papal kingdom, than that it lives like leeches upon blood. To read over the history of the inquisition, and of their massacres, would make men take toads, and adders, and mad dogs, and wolves, for harmless things in comparison of some men. If any would requite them (or others) with the like, I hate it in Protestant or Papist. The Turks conquered the Greek empire, partly by the mutinous divisions of the Christians, and partly by promising them liberty of religion. And then the Christians thought they should have that, they yielded up the empire with the less resistance. And that which was so advantageous to the infidels, might, well used and limited, be more advantageous to the Christian truth and church.

But though good things may be used in an ill cause, it is a sign of a bad cause which needeth bad means. That cause which is carried on by lying, perjury, and deceit, by malignant, love-killing endeavours, and by cruelty, and hurtfulness, and blood, is thereby made suspicious to all wise men. It is a wonder of impudence in Baronius, Binnius, and other Papists, to justify Martin, a canonized saint, for renouncing communion to the death with the synods and bishops who persuaded the emperor to draw the sword against the Gnostic Priscillianists; and themselves to defend a thousandfold greater cruelties and murders in their own church on the account of religion. But sin is mad self-contradiction.

4. I conclude with this great truth: they that hate and oppose godly men's obedience to God, do seek to silence the chief witness of Christ, and to cast out Christianity from the earth. Christianity cannot be proved to be true, but by the Spirit, which is its seal and witness. This witness of

the Spirit was not only extraordinary in languages and numerous miracles, but also ordinary in the work of sanctification. This seal is set on all that shall be saved in all times and places. The Lord knoweth who are his. "And let him that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." "He redeemed us to purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works; teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world: looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;" Tit. ii. 12—14. By this healing work Christ is known to be indeed our Physician, the real Saviour that saveth his people from their sins. As man generateth man, and the father is known by the similitude of the child; and as he is known to be a good artist that can make others such. This is Christ's standing witness in all times and places. And when you would turn this into scorn, and cloud it with slanders, or the charge of hypocrisy, and would have judged an odious people, and have them driven out of the world, what do you in effect but spit in the face of Christ, and crown him with thorns, and call him a deceiver, and crucify him afresh, and seek to expel Christianity from the earth? What reasonable man could believe Christ to be Christ, the Saviour of the world, if he did not sanctify men, and make them much better and fitter for heaven than other men?

So that in this you directly militate for the devil, the world and the flesh, against God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, against the holy catholic church, and the communion of saints, and the hope of resurrection and life everlasting; which if you did openly under the name of infidels or heathens, or rather as the professed soldiers of the devil, it were less disingenuous and hypocritical, than to do it in the church, and under Christ's colours, and in the Christian name.

And you must be sure that you are stronger than God and our Saviour, if you will prevail to the last. God hath undertaken the defence of the just: Christ hath undertaken to present them triumphant before his Father, and cast their enemies into hell. Are you sure you can overcome him? Vile worms that cannot fetch a breath without him! When began you to be stronger than God? Was it in the womb? Or in infancy when you could not go? Or was it when the devil and the flesh made you mad or drunken in ignorant

malice? If so, the drunken fit will soon be over, and God will awake a tormenting wit. If you can conquer God, try your strength first on his works: stop the sun; change night and day; turn the tide of the sea; live without meat or air; resolve that you will never die; save all your friends from death. Can you do none of this, and yet will you venture a war against God? Or do you think to fight against his servants, and bribe him to be on your side, and forsake them to your rage? Did Christ take man's nature, and die to save them, and will he now turn on satan's side against them? He overcame the devil's temptation on earth; yea, called Peter satan; Matt. xvi. When he would have tempted him not to die for his chosen. Let men or devils go try him in his glory, whether he will change his mind, and take your part against his own holy truth and servants.

CHAPTER IV.

Objections and false accusations answered.

BUT I know that as Christ and his apostles were not hated, nor killed without pretended cause and reason, nor the martyrs murdered without accusation; so none will now justify the scorning or persecuting an innocent person, or a saint as such, but they will first make them odious, and seem worthy of all that is done against them. They will say, it is not godly men, but wicked hypocrites that we hate and prosecute; a false and odious sort of persons, who are unruly, and set up their own wit and will against the laws and governors of the several kingdoms where they live: they are the very worst of men.

Ans. If they are so indeed, they are none of the men that I am pleading for, nor you the men that I reprove. But before we come to particular accusations, it is your wisdom to answer these few questions.

1. Have you particular matter against them to make good this charge? Or is it only a general malicious accusation?

2. Is it individual persons that you mean, by whom it is proved? Or do you thus accuse whole companies of men? What if one said of Papists, Jews, or Turkey, they are mur-

derers, adulterers, perjured, &c. do you think he were not an odious slanderer, to speak that of all or most, or the whole party, which he can prove but by some few?

3. Do you know all the persons whom you accuse? And have you heard it proved? Or do you not say this of the whole congregations assembled to worship God, of whom you know not one of many? If this be so, it is inhuman calumny.

4. Have the particular persons been heard speak for themselves, and give the reason of their actions? And were they proved insufficient? Or were they condemned unheard? Or was God's word derided, and taken for no reason?

5. Do you not know that the devil is the great accuser of the brethren? And that he hath malice and craft enough to say as bad as you can say, by the best of men? And must he be believed?

6. Are you sure you can make God believe you, that these men are as bad as you affirm? If not, and if he find a man in prison for obeying his word, and ask who laid him there, will you undertake to prove that he was laid there for some crime? If God own him, and say, he is my servant, will you confute him, and say, No; but he is a schismatic? God knoweth a saint from a schismatic better than you do. Sheep-stealers use to shear the sheep, and cut out the mark. But they have to do with men. God's mark is where man cannot take it away; and the foundation of God standeth sure. The Lord knoweth who are his.

7. Know you not that Christ, and his apostles, and all the martyrs were as deeply charged, and put to death as malefactors? We must then have better proof than accusation.

8. If they prove faithful Christians whom you thus accuse, Christ hath undertaken their justification: it is his office. And do you think to baffle him? Can he not answer you? Rom. viii. 32, 33, 35. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that will condemn them?

9. Have you not greater sins yourselves than those whom you accuse? If so, you condemn yourselves. Would you have God judge of them as you do? If so, do you not tell him how to judge of you, and even crave him to condemn you?

10. Doubtless you know that you are sinners: and how think you to be justified at the bar of God? Is there any but Christ to judge and justify you? And do you think he

will justify his enemies, that hated, accused and condemned his servants?

11. Those that dwell near godly Christians and should know them, are more inexcusable for their malice and slanders than foreigners and strangers are. Men of another land or age may be deceived by lying fame or history; but you that are their neighbours are without excuse. I speak for none but persons fearing and obeying God: and you might easily have known that they are neither fornicators, drunkards, perjured, swearers, liars, oppressors, thieves, nor suffer for any such crimes as these.

12. And if they are as wicked as you say, why do you not prosecute them for such wickedness? What are the French Protestants now prosecuted and ruined for? Have any judicatures proved them guilty of any such crimes against God or man? Or is it not, only for worshipping God contrary to the king's and prelate's laws? And how is that? As Christ's apostles did: they refuse nothing in God's worship which God commanded, or any of Christ's apostles used, or any churches in their days, or long after. And did the apostles offer God so odious a worship as deserved hatred and destruction? When Daniel's enemies designed his ruin, they said, "We shall find no matter against this Daniel except it be concerning the law of his God," Dan. vi.; and so they got a law made against praying to any God but the king for a certain time. Daniel must be cast to the lions for breaking the king's law. The poor flies deserve death for coming into the spider's web: but did not the venomous worm spin it of purpose out of her own bowels, or condensate air, to take and kill the flies by craft? In England there are many that worship God as the French Protestants do, and no better than Christ's apostles did: if this be their horrid wickedness that makes them unworthy to live out of prison, say so, and pretend no other. But if it be heresy, false doctrine, perjury, fornication, robbing, treason, sedition or any other crime, why are they not accused of these before the judges? And why are those charged with them that never were so accused and proved guilty? Will not all wise men take those persons for malicious liars, who by their published accusations thus odiously charge multitudes, and never offer to prove it against them at the judicatures? Their accusations shew they want not will, therefore their not pro-

secuting them for any such sort of crimes, shews that it is truth that is wanting.

13. And if they be such wicked persons, whence is it, that they are charged merely with hypocrisy, by such as say, that they live soberly, and justly, and demurely, but they are at the heart as bad as others. Their accusers commonly confess that they are most free from all immoralities, and have an outward show of righteousness, but these heart-searchers see that their hearts are bad. And do they not by this confute their own accusations?

14. And why is it that they that know them best can see none of the wickedness which you accuse them of, (beyond those human infirmities of which they most accuse themselves). As I have oft done, I again solemnly profess, as one that cannot be far from my account before the Judge of all the world, that having now lived to the sixty-eighth year of my age, and been most familiar since the age of sixteen or seventeen, with that sort of men whom the vulgar then called Puritans (described by Mr. Bolton and such other Conformists) though I have met with many that had their mistakes, and frailties, and troublesome differences in lesser things, and some hypocrites intruded among them, yet I never knew any other sort of men comparable to them in Christian knowledge, faith, obedience to God, hatred of sin, care of their duty to God and man, sobriety, temperance, chastity, truth, heavenly desires, endeavours and hopes: and that they so far excelled the rest of my acquaintance, as made their grace amiable to me, and confirmed my belief of the sacred Scriptures: yea, more, if I had not had the happiness of knowing such a sort of men that in holiness, justice and love excelled the rest of my acquaintance, or at least, credibly heard of such, I could not have believed in Christ, as a Saviour of men whom he made no better than Turks and infidels; nor could I have believed a heaven for men no better prepared for it. And that now near my end, I see so great a difference in holiness, justice and charity, between those commonly reviled for worshipping God but as the apostles did, and those that hate and persecute them, as greatly helps me in believing that there is a Saviour, and Sanctifier, and heaven for the faithful, and a devil that deceives the rest, and a hell that will receive them, which is even visibly begun on earth.

Accus. 'But (say they) it is not for their godliness or sobriety that we accuse them, but for their sin and wickedness.'

Answ. Still this is but general, and signifieth nothing. But, 1. What is that odious sin? 2. It is God's merciful providence that keeps sin in general under such shame, as that the actors of it speak against it, even in their slanders. 3. But if this be the true cause, why do you cull out those that have least sin, to fasten your accusations of sin upon? If there be a conformable minister that is more holy, charitable, and zealous against sin than the rest, he is one of those that is called a Puritan, and accused of sin. Why do we hear none of your furious charges against the common drunkards, revellers, gamesters, whoremongers, persecutors, profane blasphemers, liars, and the families that call not upon God, shew no serious regard of any religion at all? You can live among these, and swear, and drink, and play with them, and never cry out against them as bad men.

Accus. 'But religion being the best thing, the corrupters of that are worse than drunkards, and swearers, and adulterers.'

Answ. Such corrupters there may be, as are worse indeed: but what is it that they corrupt religion in? They subscribe to all the Bible, and the ancient creeds; and if need be, to the English Articles of Religion. Is not all that enough? Their many large published writings tell the world their judgment in religion: such as Mr. Arthur Hildersham's, Mr. Perkins', Mr. Greenham's, Dod's, Anthony Burgess's, Richard Alleine's, and abundance such. What errors are in these?

2. Why are they not these twenty years accused of preaching false doctrine, and proved guilty, and punished for it, if they are such?

3. If it be not in doctrine, what is it?

Accus. 'They worship God contrary to the law, in not using the Common Prayer Book.'

Answ. 1. Those that constantly join in the parish churches in the Common Prayer are as much hated, reviled and persecuted as the rest. Therefore this charge is but hypocrisy.

2. What do they that for matter or manner is positively contrary to law in God's worship? They read Scripture, pray, preach, praise God with psalms, communicate in the Lord's supper: doth the law forbid any of this?

3. Not using the rest of the liturgy is a negation, and no

act at all, and therefore no act of worship, and therefore no unlawful act, no more than silence is : he that is silent, and he that omits the rest of the liturgy, worships not God by using it ; but he doth nothing contrary to it, or forbidden by it.

4. If Peter and Paul were unknown in England, and worshipped God but as they did on earth, would you therefore call them rogues or rebels, or lay them in gaol? Did they worship God in an odious or intolerable manner? Did the Holy Ghost by them write an infallible rule for all things necessary in religion ; and yet are they insufferable rogues that worship God but according to that rule?

5. Are they wiser men than they that have made us another rule or worship : or have they more of God's Spirit, and more authority in religion ?

6. Do the imposers say, that all which they add is no part of religion, but things indifferent? And are they odious corrupters of religion, who omit no part of religion, but only human indifferent things?

7. Do you not reverence the church for some hundred years after Christ, which imposed no liturgies, but left every pastor to use his own prayers?

8. Do you not harden the Papists that call our religion new, and ask where it was two hundred years ago, if you make the liturgy as now formed and imposed, our religion, when it is not two hundred years old.

9. The godly bishops of England have ever owned the other Protestant churches, and their communion, who have none of our liturgies, nor any like it.

10. If this be odious crime, why do you never revile or prosecute the atheists, infidels, Sadducees, Hobbists, and those many thousands that seldom, if ever, go to any church, or worship God publicly at all? Is the worship that Peter and Paul used worse than irreligiousness and infidelity?

11. Who can believe that you are sincerely zealous against mis-worshipping God, when you can ordinarily yourselves be in a drinking house or playhouse, at the time of public worship? And when so few of you never so much as worship God in your families, by prayer, or read the Scripture, or catechise your families?

Is it not a strange thing to hear men accuse others for not using the liturgy in God's worship, and at the same time would have them that refuse it, to be forbidden all public

worshipping of God at all? Doth this signify any dislike of their omitting God's worship? Which is the more ungodly omission? To omit all worship of God, and live like atheists, or to omit only so much of the liturgy as the apostles used not? I have known many that could not eat cheese, as is said before, (nor scarce smell it without danger of death). If you would have a law made that such shall eat no other meat, few wise men will believe that it is their health and life that you desire. If a man fail in paying his landlord some odd act of service, will you make a law that he shall pay nothing at all? If a subject neglect paying some excise, or using bow and arrows, will you forbid him paying any thing, or serving the king at all? Sure they that forbid men all public worship, be offended at somewhat else than that men do not rightly worship God, unless they think that not to worship him at all is better than doing it without their book.

Object. 'But he shall be compelled to better worship.'

Ans. How? When he lieth in gaol he cannot publicly worship God at all. Is that better worship? I know it is banishment that some would have executed. And will men worship God any better among heathens or infidels, or others? Or why should other countries endure them, if they be not to be endured in their own?

Are not Englishmen that worship God only by their own book, as much Nonconformists when they are in other lands, France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Holland, &c. as those are here that do not use it. And are they there intolerable and worthy of ruin?

Did the apostles or first churches banish any on such accounts? Will Christ banish them from his kingdom? Hath he made any such laws? And is not he the absolute Sovereign? Hath he left his servants to the will of man, to use them how they will, or cast out of his church whom they will? Are you sure these are none of the number of whom Christ saith, "I was hungry and ye fed me not," &c. "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it not to me;" Matt. xxv.

Accus. 'But they are schismatics, and separate from the church; and is not that a damnable sin?'

Ans. 1. Being speaking only to malignant enemies of serious godliness, I say, It is not only separatists that you

hate, but godly conformists, yea perhaps most of all, because you are more restrained from hurting them. How oft hear we curses and revilings against conforming Puritans, or as some call them, Church Whigs. If they are not haters of their brethren, but friends to love and peace, you nickname them Trimmers. And cursing those whom Christ blesseth, when he saith, "Blessed be the peacemakers, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," you say, 'Cursed be the Trimmers, and would the kingdom were rid of them.' It is any that are for a holy life, and obedience to God, that you abhor.

2. As I said before, you spare those that come to the parish churches no more than others. The old Nonconformists wrote more against separation than any else in England did. And yet were hated as intolerable. The reconcilers who are since made Nonconformists, did publicly offer to be subject to archbishops and bishops, to use the liturgy themselves if reformed, and if it were not, yet never pleaded for separation. And yet are never the more endured.

But who is it that they separate from? Do they not profess union and communion with the whole catholic church on earth? What separation do you mean? Is it their local absence? And are not you such separatists from all the world, saving the assembly where you meet? One cannot be in two places at once.

Or is it that they dislike somewhat in your forms of worship? So they may in other forms, with whom yet they profess communion. And in what is it that they shew dislike or separation? They hold communion with you as Christians, and as reformed from popery. They separate not from Papists as Christians. And from you it is only for that which you say is no part of your worship or religion, but things indifferent, which they think to be sin. And are those Separatists from your church, who only separate from that which is no part of your church or worship?

3. Are the French and Dutch churches in London schismatics or Separatists, who profess communion with our churches, though they use not our oaths, subscriptions, or liturgy? Liking their own mode better, and preferring it is no separation. If I like your liturgy better than any in the *Bibliotheca Patrum*, is that separating from all churches that use the rest?

4. Who are the schismatics in France, Italy, Poland, &c.

Those that are called so, and persecuted as such; or those that impose on them the things which they judge sinful?

What if you were in a Presbyterian land, where the liturgy and prelacy are forbidden, and another form set up by law; and you should contrary to that law use the liturgy and ceremonies; or at least refuse subscribing against prelacy, and for lay elders? If they excommunicated or ruined you for this, who do you think were guilty of the schism?

5. Do they forsake the assemblies before they are excommunicated? Or is it not an odd thing for to excommunicate men first, and then accuse them for not coming to church? I have known ministers stop in the midst of public worship, and refuse to go on till an excommunicate person went out. The whole representative Church of England do, in their fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth canons, 'ipso facto,' without trial or sentence, excommunicate all in England, who affirm any thing to be sinful or repugnant to God's word in the church-governing offices whatsoever, in the liturgy, ceremonies, or articles. And shall they after this be called separatists for not coming in? Doth not the canon shew that the church would not have them come in, when they cast them out?

Object. 'But the church and canon bid them repent of that their wicked error, and publicly confess it, and so come in.'

Ans. 1. Is a man's judgment absolutely in his power? Can a man believe a thing to be a wicked error merely because the canon saith so? He that can believe what is list, believeth nothing truly. If this belief be necessary to church communion, and to escape damning schism, it is necessary to salvation. Why then is it not in the creed, ten commandments, or Bible? Do you call them the things indifferent, and then call it a wicked error to hold them sinful? Is not this to make it necessary to salvation or communion, to have so much learning or knowledge, as to know all indifferent words and things in the world to be indifferent which men will impose? I would all church members with yours and others knew all necessary things. Do you believe in your heart that all, or half the parishioners do know these things

to be lawful, or understand any more of them than those that think otherwise? When thousands cannot answer a necessary question of the creed or catechism, nor know who Christ is, and how he saveth us?

Why is there not a catechism made containing the sound proof that lay chancellor's power of the keys, and diocesan bishops that have no bishops under them, and our present court-church discipline, and all the rubric, ceremonies, and forms are lawful, if all must be excommunicate with the church.

Object. 'If they are so ignorant that they cannot know church orders to be lawful, they are not fit to communicate with the church.'

Ans. Make no church orders necessary to communion, but what Christ and his apostles have made necessary to it; and then cast out and spare not all as ignorant that refuse them.

2. But again, do you believe that most, or all that you keep in, are wiser and more knowing than those that you cast out? How shall such as I believe you, who know that in all the parishes which my cohabitation alloweth me to know, it is the most knowing and religious part that most dissent, and the generality of the grossly ignorant that understand few articles of the creed, do conform. As ignorant as I am, and hundreds of my calling and mind, I would I were not only silenced and imprisoned, but put to death, on condition that all that you now receive as members of the church, had no more ignorance than we have. But it is our lot to tire ourselves with teaching poor people to understand their baptism, Christianity, creed, Lord's prayer, and ten commandments, and leave most ignorant when all is done, and yet ourselves after our hardest and longest study, to be judged so ignorant about some indifferent things, as to be unfit for ministry or communion.

Accus. If men will not obey church governors and laws, they are rebels, and unfit for Christian society. If every man shall follow his own fancy, what order will there be? Do not all churches require obedience to their orders?

Ans. 1. The church hath one universal King, who hath made universal laws for all; which must be first obeyed, and against which no man hath power. And yet his own laws have things necessary to all, in which they must unite, and

integrals and accidents which all know not, in which they must bear with one another. No man understandeth all the Bible. And are many laws and books more necessary than God's?

2. Whoever depraveth the necessary points of religion by his own fancies, should be rejected. But all men living err in many lesser things.

3. In what countries is it that your rule holds, that rulers must be thus far obeyed in religion? Is it in China, or Pegu, or Hindostan, or Turkey? Or is it in Italy, Spain, Poland, Silesia, Bavaria, or France? Or is it at Geneva, Holland, or the Presbyterian countries? Or is it only in England, Scotland, and Ireland? And was it so here before Henry the Eighth, or only since? And how shall any know where it is, unless he try and judge his ruler's commands by the laws of God? Will you follow this rule in France or Spain? Or shall all subjects judge of kings' capacities?

Accus. 'But they hold unlawful assemblies of their own, and worship God contrary to law, and yield not so much as passive obedience.'

Answ. 1. You know the ministers are forbidden their office, unless they will take those oaths, subscriptions, professions, and practices, which they dare not take, for fear of sin and damnation. And they would be thankful if their reasons may be heard, and if any will instruct them better. And they are confirmed in their opinion by the answers, or no answers rather, made to the reasons already given in. And they are devoted or vowed to the sacred ministry in their ordination. And if there be such a sin as sacrilege in the world, they are confident it were sacrilege in them to alienate themselves from the office which they have undertaken. As it is apostacy from Christianity to violate our baptismal vow, though men should command it, they doubt not but it is perfidious apostacy from the sacred ministry, to violate the ordination vow, though bishops silence them. As it is adultery to violate the conjugal contract, though a bishop should require it; seeing he that married them hath no power to unmarry them, unless they do it first themselves, and prove deserters or adulterers.

2. And the people that are excommunicate, or forbidden

to worship God publicly, unless they will do that which they think is sin, are still under God's command to worship him, and not to forsake church-assembling for his worship. What would you have these ministers and people do? They study and pray to God to convince them, if they take these oaths, subscriptions, professions, and practices to be sin, and they be no sin. They resolve to be ruled by God's word. They are willing to hear any thing that may better inform them. They wonder that men accuse them that have no more to say to change them. If they desert the ministry, they fear God's vengeance. If these poor people give over all God's public worship, and live like atheists, conscience living or dying will torment them. If they do that which they are persuaded is sin, when the imposers call it but indifferent, Paul hath antedated their sentence; "He that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith. For whatsoever is not of faith is sin;" Rom. xiv. Change their judgment they cannot. Sin they dare not. To give over worshipping God is to renounce salvation. Change the law or canon men will not. It seems to me a strange penalty to forbid men to worship God at all, because they think some subscriptions or forms to be sin. More strange than to say, all that will not wear crape shall go naked. Or all that will not eat anchovies shall eat nothing. If a man think the use of a crucifix in worship sinful, sure to give over all worship is more sinful. But men have their ways.

3. What worship is it that they offer God contrary to law? They are willing to do all required in Scripture by Christ and his apostles. And were they rebels and rogues? Or is their worship intolerable?

4. What harm will it do their neighbours, or any, if they only read the Scripture, and praise God with psalms, and preach and pray as God prescribeth, without subscriptions or ceremonies? Are any hurt by this? Doth the same liberty to the Dutch here hurt any body, or break peace? Doth the difference of cathedral and parish worship break peace? or of those churches that have organs and altars, and those that have none?

The Papists are the greatest pretenders to unity, and most cry down schism; and yet if all will but be servants to

the pope, he will license multitudes of orders that more differ from one another than we from you. Jesuits, Benedictines, Dominicans, Carthusians, and abundance more.

5. Dare any man of self-knowledge and conscience say, that all your worship is not more faulty than is the omission of a form or ceremony? Will not all the world be forbidden to worship God, if all as bad as this be forbidden? And how many worshippers of God, think you, will be left in England, if all must give over that have greater faults than the omission of a thing called but indifferent?

6. As to what you talk of passive obedience, though the phrase be a contradiction, yet the thing meant is a mere cheat of one that hath devised that absurd phrase: and calls omissive obedience by the name of passive; omitting an action is not suffering. Daniel was forbid to pray, and the apostles to preach. They would not yield this omissive obedience, but they yielded that which is commonly called passive. They patiently suffered.

7. Do you not know that about two hundred thousand in and near London cannot come within the doors of the parish churches (nor hundreds hear that can croud in); shall all these be made atheists, or taken for rebels if they will not forbear to worship God?

8. I suppose you know that many thousands stay at home in their houses, shops, taverns, in sin or idleness. Are these thought worthy of a gaol or banishment? or is their course better than to worship God as Peter and Paul did? O the difference between God's judgment and some men's! But God's judgment shall determine all.

9. Are there no unfaithful and unskilful ministers? Will no patrons choose such? Is not the minister's skill and faithfulness of great importance to men's salvation? What if bishops or laws imposed an unskilful or untrusty physician on you, and forbade you to choose a better, would you die obediently, or rather say, No one hath power so to betray my life? No nor your soul neither.

10. If you have the hearts of Christians, consider this undeniable consequence. If you will have no union or concord among Christians till they agree in all things that are of no greater weight and evidence, than your forms and ceremonies are, you would have no concord in the world, no not between any two persons. And you may as well say,

none shall be endured that are not just of the same visage and complexion. And then all the doubt will be, who is the man that will be the strongest and longest liver, or possess all England himself alone.

Accus. 'But they shew that they are perjured, false, unconscionable rogues, that took on them to scruple oaths and our church communion till now, and now can do all rather than be out of places of trust.

Ans. 1. As to your church communion, can you blind men's eyes, that they shall not read what the old nonconformists have written to persuade men to it? See Messrs. Hildersham, Bradshaw, Gifford, Paget, Ball, and abundance more. And did not the present nonconformists shew the same judgment, in 1660, and 1661, in their treaty? And do not many come to your assemblies? And would they not all that are ministers preach there if they could have leave? And have you not, as is afore proved, excommunicated them by your canons, 5—8. And is the Oxford act (which imprisoneth them all six months if they be seen within five miles of a corporation or any place where they have preached within twenty years) an invisible thing? Do you lay men in gaol by it, and yet think it must be unknown? And he that knows it, knows that it sentences all such to gaol if they be seen in your churches? And it is the course of human converse to say, If you come into any church within five miles, &c. you shall lie in gaol six months; and if you do not, you are rogues, and shall lie in gaol for not coming. Just when the ministers agreed to come more frequently than before, this act came out, and drove them back. You will say, they can appear in their own assemblies. *Ans.* 1. His majesty encouraged them by granting them liberty by his declaration. 2. They have more hope there of escaping out of your hands, than they have in your own churches.

And do you not see in print what Mr. Tombes the Anabaptist wrote long ago to persuade his followers to your communion? And what Mr. Nye wrote to persuade the independents to come to your churches? What great change is here of their judgments?

Object. 'But why did not the people do so all this while?'

Ans. Because their own teachers did, as they thought, more profit them. Many a man thinks it lawful to wear rags

that yet had rather wear whole and comely clothes ; and lawful to eat brown bread, and drink water, that will fare better when they can, and yet take these when they cannot. The people that had good houses before the fire, did without any chance of their judgments get into any poor rooms or cottages after it.

2. But suppose they lately change their judgments (as many no doubt have), you that think it is for the better are strange Christians that reproach men for repenting and amending. Do you call them to church and reproach them for not coming, and seek to ruin them for it, and now accuse them for coming? Doth not this shew that some men desired the present impositions, not for concord of all, but to drive some away, lest they should come in, and the land have concord? And doth not this shew what men we have to do with ; and that it is somewhat else than nonconformity which such men hate? Your justice is, ‘Come to church, or lie in gaol as schismatics. And if you come you are perfidious rogues.’ Whether they do or do not, all is one to such judges, who have some other hateful matter in their eye.

Object. ‘But their doing it just now to keep their character, and keep from suffering, proveth that they are perfidious rogues.’

Answ. 1. I pray tell men of brains and sense, for what it is that you would have men excommunicated, and laid in gaol or fined, if they conform not. Do you do all this without any purpose or hope to drive them to conformity? And do you do it only to make them perfidious rogues. If suffering may not alter them, why do you use it on them?

2. But who knows not that some things are lawful to avoid suffering which else would not be lawful. It is lawful to cast your goods into the sea to save the ship and men’s lives ; which else were a sin. It is lawful to give a thief your purse to save your life, which else were unlawful. It is lawful to blow up neighbour’s houses to stop a fire. Christ proved it lawful to break the sabbath in cases of necessity ; he withdrew into the wilderness and far from Jerusalem, to avoid the Pharisees’ persecution. And Paul was let down by the wall in a basket ; and which without danger of suffering, had not been lawful. Though no sin must be done to avoid suffering, yet that may and must be done, which

self-preservation makes no sin, but a duty ; to kill a man that assaults you in your own defence is not the same crime as unnecessarily to kill him.

But as to the other case of taking the corporation oath and declaration, if you know the case (as you should do before you accuse men), you know that it is the true sense of them that is all the controversy. Nobody scruples swearing loyalty, and renouncing rebellion and sedition, and all unlawful means of reformation. That which makes it difficult is that on one side, the proper universal sense of the words seem to them unlawful, and oaths must be taken in the usual sense, unless our rulers give another, yet on the other side, learned sober conformists profess that they take such words in the limited sense, or else they would not take them ; and they argue subtly to prove that to be the true sense ; and our lawmakers to whom it belongs will not end the controversy by an exposition. And can you wonder here if men fluctuate in uncertainty ? And a late writer having given subtler arguments for the limited sense than were published before, did persuade many. And in that limited sense twenty non-conformist ministers took the oath long ago in London at one time.

But I justify none that mistake in so great a matter. And doubtless if they sinned God will not bless it to their good ; it will prove their snare. And I am glad that we are agreed that perjury is a heinous sin. I beseech you then to consider, 1. Whether those men are fit to accuse them who drive them to it, and say to ministers, Swear or lie in gaol. 2. Or those who are of the mind of Grotius, Bishop Taylor, and such others, that lying is lawful when it saves ourselves, and wrongs no other ; and of those divines that say, it is as lawful to defend myself from pernicious imposers with my tongue as with my hands.

3. Let us all with fear (who believe there is a God) avoid the dreadful crime of perjuring the whole land. This whole kingdom is sworn against all foreign jurisdiction in the oath of supremacy ; and against all endeavours to alter the government of church or state, by, 1. The corporation act. 2. The vestry act. 3. The militia act. 4. The Oxford act of confinement. 5. And obliged by the act of uniformity. Is it not perjury then to endeavour any alteration of it ? 1. What shall we then think of them that would bring in pope-

ry? Would they not perjure the kingdom? 2. What shall we say of them that write for a foreign church jurisdiction, under the name of General Councils, or a college of bishops, or of foreign patriarchs, or of whom the pope is chief, and the ‘*principium unitatis*’ to the universal church. Is it no change of our church government to bring us under a foreign jurisdiction? Is it no change of state government to make the king and kingdom subject to that foreign jurisdiction, who may excommunicate him, and so bring on him all the evil that excommunication inferreth? And what man in his wits knoweth not that prelates and priests are much at the will and power of the princes under whom they live? Doth not our king expect that his bishops obey him? And those that must have this universal jurisdiction over our king and us, are the subjects of other princes, of which the far greatest part are Papists, Mahometans, Infidels, Heathens, or such as are called heretics; and if our king and we be made subject to the subjects of the Turk, the pope, the kings of Spain, France, Poland, the emperor, the Muscovite, the dukes of Bavaria, Tuscany, and such like, is he not made a subject to their lords and masters, and much worse? Will not this project perjure England?

3. Whether it be any alteration of government by them that would change the power and use of parliaments, I leave to lawyers.

4. But I would fain be satisfied of another case. These kingdoms of England and Scotland took a covenant and vow, some voluntarily, some at their compositions, who had been sequestered for the king. This vow contained divers matters, of which some are notorious duties, as to repent of their sins, to oppose popery, schism, and profaneness, to defend the king, &c. It is not denied by most that I meet with, that this oath or vow was unlawfully imposed, and unlawfully taken, and many think some of the matter was unlawful, viz. to oppose prelacy, &c. But seeing casuists are agreed, that an oath unlawfully both imposed and taken, bindeth to that part of the matter which is lawful and necessary, notwithstanding the conjunction of the rest. And the corporations of England are all formed by a declaration taken by all in power and trust, that ‘There is no obligation (without the least exception) on me or any other person from the oath called the Solemn League and Covenant; the doubt

is, whether every man may declare that, of all the thousands of three kingdoms (whom he never knew) no one is bound by that oath, or vow, to repent of his sins, or in his place and calling to oppose schism, popery, or profaneness, or to defend the king. And whether all may declare that the Londoners and ministers, and the restored old parliament, and General Monk's army who restored the king, as supposing they were bound to it by that oath, were all deceived, and were under no such obligation thence. And whether I am not bound in charity to think that the sequestered royalists put a good sense on it when they took it. And so whether all the corporations of England are free from — And for what it is that God hath singled them out for judgment.

If you be agreed with us (and with mankind) against so great a sin as perjury, especially national, let us help one another with love and patience to resolve such doubts.

Accus. 'But they have been guilty of rebellion in a civil war, and therefore are justly suspected to preach or hold rebellious doctrine.'

Ans. 1. Are those men lovers of love and concord who purposely make use of pardoned acts to keep the kingdom's wounds still open? Did not the king tell you in his declarations and act of oblivion, that the putting up all (save to the excepted persons), and closing for the future in mutual love, was the only way to the nation's peace? You would tempt men to think that you desire to see such days again, by trying whether destroying men will tempt nature to a self-defence.

2. But you have oft had it proved (by Henry Fowles, Bishop Barlow, and abundance more), that no Protestants come near the principles and practices of the Papists, as to king-killing and rebellion. And if yet you know not that the war began between two parties of episcopal conformists here among the English, you are unfit to judge of that which you know not. And by reading Rushworth, Whitlock, or any true histories of such times and matters, you may be better informed. As you may of their different principles if you read Jewel, Bishop Bilson, and Richard Hooker on one side, and Mainwaring and Sibthorp on the other.

3. But how few men are alive that had any hand in those miserable wars? You have oft been offered a thousand thanks if you will silence and hunt no other that are as inno-

cent as you, and more than many of their accusers. And shall thousands suffer for other men's deeds? 3. What will wise men think of such a sort of men, as charge multitudes in general with rebellious and seditious doctrine, and have accused so few of any such these twenty years, that I know not of one publicly accused, tried and proved guilty, of all called Presbyterians in all this land? If they are guilty prove it, and let the guilty suffer, and not the innocent; only had I my wish I would bar perjury, and condemning men unheard.

Accus. 'They are an unpeaceable sort of people.'

Answ. That is soon said. Who hath these twenty-two years manifested most desires of peace? They that have begged for it again and again; pleaded and written for it; offered their oaths that they would obey any lawful commands for it, and do any thing which they did not believe that God forbids? Or those bishops that would not have one form or ceremony, or needless subscription forborn, to save thousands of ministers from being silenced and laid in common gaols, nor to save many thousands of the people from suffering, and to heal the divisions of the church. One would think this should be as easy a controversy, as when soldiers are plundering the country, and the people on their knees entreating for their goods and lives, to determine which of them is most against war.

Accus. 'But what need they make such a stir with their religion. What need they any more than go to church and live obediently and be quiet? Why will they be righteous overmuch; will not less ado bring men to heaven? Why do they differ from their neighbours, and judge all carnal that be not as scrupulous as they? God is merciful; and will he save none but Puritans, or precise zealots?'

Answ. Now you come to the real matter of your distaste. I did not meddle with the case of nonconformity as it is a controversy between godly men, but only as you make a pretence of it to exercise your enmity against serious godliness, and a handle to lay hold on many whom Christ will justify and save. To all beforesaid I add,

1. If you think they do too much, search the Scriptures, and see whether it be not less than God commandeth? And if so, is it not God whom you accuse and reproach?

2. If they do too much in obeying God, why do canon-

makers impose such abundance on them, as if God had not imposed enough?

3. Why do you never find fault with men for being too strong, too healthful, too rich, too great, but only for being too obedient to God? When Christ saith; if we did all that God commandeth we must say, we are unprofitable servants, we have done no more than was our duty, and the best on earth came short of duty. But this, which is the core, I answered before: and conclude, that all that be in their right wits can more easily bear all your accusations and persecutions of us, as if we did too much in obedience to God, than the accusation of conscience and the displeasure of God for doing too little: which, alas! when we have done our best would sink us into despair, had we not the merits of Christ's suffering and perfect righteousness to trust to.

CHAPTER V.

A humble Expostulation with the English Papists who by Information and Prosecution seek our Ruin.

THOUGH it be not Popery as such that I am here reasoning against, the course that many Papists take in seeking our destruction, giveth me cause of this humble expostulation: and I speak now of no other, but of them. I mean, 1. Those that write so hotly and ragingly to provoke superiors to ruin us. 2. Those that make a trade of being delators against us for worshipping God as we do. 3. Those of them that break in upon us with greatest haughtiness and fury, to take away all our goods, and seek our imprisonment. 4. Those that seek to ruin us by those laws which were made against themselves. 5. Those that would make superiors believe that our doctrine is more rebellious than theirs. To these I offer a few modest questions.

Quest. 1. There are some among you that profess great spirituality and strictness in religion. Serenus Cressy wrote to me (commending Baker's book which he published,) that he forsook the church of England because he found no spiritual contemplation and devotion among us. Such as Nerius, Sales, Kempis, Gerson Borromæus, Renti, &c. are really the chief honour of your church. Much of that for

which I am hated by the enemies of serious godliness, I acknowledge to God's praise, I was first chiefly awakened to a book written by one whom Watson and others of your party grievously accuse, I mean Parson's book of Resolution corrected by Bunney. True Christianity and godliness is the same thing in all that have it. Your priest, Mr. Hutchinson, alias Berry, writeth that the most of serious godliness among Protestants is found among those called Puritans; so that I was fain to defend the Conformists against his charge. All this being so, is it the Spirit of God that engageth and enrageth you with the most destructive bitterness against those men whom you confess to be the most religious, merely because they are stiffest against your church-government and way of worship? And do you not know that it tendeth more sensibly than disputes, to persuade the people whom you thus hate and prosecute, that your religion is malignity, and enmity to real godliness?

Quest. 2. Do you think it is prudent for you as soon as ever you get up, and and before you dare openly own your name and cause, to begin with malice, rage and cruelty, and that against the most religious (as you say)? Will not this persuade the people that all is true that is said of your intended cruelty, and make them fear you, as so many leopards or wolves? Will they not say, if the young serpents can so easily sting, what will the old ones do? And if your infancy here begin with such destructive zeal, what will you do when you are at full growth?

Quest. 3. You cannot be ignorant what cause to accuse your church with cruelty and blood, hath been given the world by your church-laws and practices: by the council at the Lateran under Innocent III. the council for damning Henrician heretics, even kings that claim investiture of bishops, and those that decree the burning of all that you call heretics: by the murder of so many thousand Albigeneses, Waldenses, Bohemians, &c. By the inquisitions more inhuman cruelties in Belgium, and Spain, &c.: by the massacres in France, and the murder of Henry III. and IV. By Queen Mary's flames: by the two hundred thousand murdered in Ireland. And there be many among you who disown all this, and say it is not from the principles of your religion (when yet general councils approved are your religion itself). This being copiously opened (as I said before

by Henry Fowlis, Bishop Barlow, &c.), had it not been more prudent for you to have begun with lenity and love, to have drawn men to think that you are better minded, than to persuade them that you are of your ruler's and forefather's mind, and mean to imitate them?

Quest. 4. Have you not observed that all parties have fallen by forcing multitudes to be their enemies by seeking to destroy or hurt them? Most men love quietness, and will live in peace, if others will give them leave; but when they see they must offend others, or not defend themselves, it sets all their wit and power to work against their intolerable enemies. There are few creatures in the world that have not some power and inclination to hurt others for their own defence. The bee hath a sting to defend her hive and honey. And do you not remember that your sufferings in England came most by Queen Mary's flames, and the Spanish invasion, and the many treasons against Queen Elizabeth, and by the Powder Plot? And how the French massacre and murders of kings, and the horrid Inquisition set all our parliaments against you? And how the murder of 200,000 in Ireland drove many thousands into the Parliament's army that else would not have gone? And will you yet stir up the land to fear and hate you?

Quest. 5. Is it not both imprudent and unrighteous for you of all men to turn those laws against us, which were made against you, and have so much slept, and little troubled you? You will by this call people to take notice of them that did not before. For my own part, as I never hurt any of you, so I know not that any of the ministers did, whose ruin you endeavour. We hear of none of your sufferings by any such: indeed these late years many have died as for the plot so much talked of; but by whom did they die? Was it not by the accusation and witness of Papists? Were not Oats, Bedlow, Dugdale, Turberville, Prance, Dangerfield, Jenison, Smith, alias Barry, the Yorkshire witnesses, and the rest, besides the Irish, all men of yourselves, that came out of your own bosoms? Whether the men died justly or unjustly I leave to God; but sure it was men of your own selves that did it. And will you be revenged for this on such Protestants that meddled not in it?

And you should remember that you and we have a Protestant king, who hath sworn all his kingdom against all fo-

reign jurisdiction, and all endeavour of any alteration of government in church or state, and so much abhors Popery that he hath made a law severely to punish all that shall but raise any suspicion that he is a Papist. And you must in reason take heed of dishonouring and defaming him, by defaming Protestants in general.

And sure since Queen Elizabeth's days we have had no kings whom you can justly accuse of cruelty towards you. No not King James when the Powder-plot had provoked him, if half be true that the bishop of Ambrun saith of his conference with him, or that Rushforth and others say of the oath of the king, prince and council for toleration, you are disingenuous if you accuse them of cruelty or rigorous severity.

If your Philanax Anglicus (as formerly in the image of both churches) you make all called Protestants of sincerity, to be of rebellious principles, and their religion introduced by it; and yet profess that you honour the king, as if you would have men doubt whether he be a Protestant of sincerity or else were as bad as you describe. Had the severe laws been executed against you, especially for mere religion, no one could wonder if you desired relief; but while you live quietly, and words and paper hurt you not (that I hear of) to begin with so much hurtfulness to them that meddled not with you, will disserve your cause.

Quest. 6. And is it consistent with reasonable modesty to go about to make the world believe that the Protestant doctrine is less loyal than yours? Do you think your books are invisible, and all your practices forgotten. It is none of the business of this writing to accuse you herein, of any thing but falsely accusing others, and seeking to destroy us on such accusation. Though you may thus deceive the ignorant that know no more of you than what you tell them, that will but turn to your dishonour at last. Are not your foresaid council canons, which are your religion, visible? Have not the forecited writers truly cited them and multitudes of your doctrines which may better inform men? Are all the wars of Italy, Germany, &c. against princes and emperors, for the pope, forgotten? Was it not a council of your bishops that decreed that all the carcasses of those bishops that were for the Henrician heresy (that is, for the emperor's power of investing bishops and his exemption from being excommunicated and deposed by the pope) should be digged

out of their graves, and burnt? Was it not a council that deposed Ludovicus Pius? How many more such acts have they done? And are not your most learned doctors allowed to publish the justification of the pope's power to excommunicate and depose kings if they deserve it (in his judgment)? Do not your public writers, casuists, and divines ordinarily hold that the people give kings their power, and may take it away when they forfeit it, and that tyranny is such a forfeiture? And that the people should not suffer a heretic to reign? And that subjects may be absolved from their oaths of allegiance, according to the foresaid Lateran and Greg. 7. Roman councils? But too much is said of this by many, and the case is past a modest denial.

Even those Protestants that were in arms for the parliament, and restored the king, were so far from thinking that their oaths of allegiance may be dispensed with, that if I knew any thing of those men and times, it was principally the conscience of two oaths (the oath of allegiance, and the oath called the covenant) that by them overcame the opposition of the other army, and brought home the king. It was this that engaged the ministers of England against both Cromwell and a commonwealth: and the ministers were followed by most of the religious people of the land, which broke the adversary's strength. It was this that engaged the excluded members of the (then) long parliament. It was this that engaged the city of London. It seems it was this that engaged General Monk's army, when they say in their address to him (see it in *England's Triumph for King Charles II.* p. 85.), 'We hope to evince to his majesty and all the world, that we and all those that have been engaged in the parliament's cause, are his majesty's best and most real subjects, and that your excellency and the armies under your command, have complied with the obligations for which they were first raised, for the preservation of the true Protestant religion, the honour and dignity of the king, the privileges of parliament, the liberty and property of the subjects, and the fundamental laws of the land.'

I am not justifying all that I recite. I doubt not but they were much mistaken. But if they had then been told that shortly all the corporation offices and trusts in England shall be constituted by a personal declaration of every one, that 'There is no obligation on any person from the oath called

the Solemn Covenant,' to restore the king oppose schism, or any thing whatever, the effect would have been such, as makes me wonder that the royalists (as then called) should be very eager to make all such declare, that all these soldiers, ministers, parliament, and citizens that restored the king as bound to it by that oath, were therein mistaken, and no such obligation thence was on them.

Quest. 7. I need not name to you the sorry fellows out of the gaols, where they lay for inhuman villanies that have been our zealous, ranting, tearing, prosecutors? And do you think such actions are in honour to your cause? If it be good, use good men in it.

Quest. 8. Why do you play your game under board, and behind the curtain? If you are not ashamed of your cause, openly own it. Is falsehood, lying, and dissembling beseeching them that say they are of a church out of which none can be saved? I remember when Terret, alias Johnson, had seduced the eldest daughter of the Countess of Balcarres (whom they stole away and made a nun in France), and she was afterwards asked, why she did so long go to our churches, join in family worship, read Protestant books, and talk against the Papists, and deride them after she was a Papist herself, she answered that they had leave to do all that as long as they did not openly profess their religion, and were not detected. But when once they were discovered and openly professed themselves Roman Catholics, they must then suffer any thing rather than conform to us.

God's cause needeth not such juggling and lying.

Quest. 9. Why do you not ingeniously plead your cause against us, so as may satisfy an understanding conscience, before you seek our destruction? 1. Your arguings are commonly fitted only to cheat the ignorant by ambiguities, and confusion, and equivocal terms; your queries or methods to the French sufferers, are only a formed cheat, by confounding, 1. Subjection to governors, and communion with neighbour churches. 2. Communion with your church in Christianity and communion with its sins. 3. A Catholic church informed only by the sovereignty of Christ, and a pretended universal church informed by the sovereignty of man (a monarch of a church parliament). 4. The office of keeping, delivering and teaching men God's laws, and an absolute power

to judge of their sense, and to make more as a supplement to their defects, obliging all the world on pain of excommunication and death, and more such.

2. Any writings which undeniably open your frauds, you take no notice of, nor vouchsafe to answer upon the opportunity of Mr. Johnson, and divers others. I have lately written, 1. A reply to Johnson. 2. A small book in answer to one of your papers, to prove that we have a certainty of Christianity without popery.

3. In answer to another, a small book called, "Full and Easy Satisfaction which is the true Religion." None of them will you answer, nor those before written. But instead of a sober investigation of the truth, some of you raise odious slanders of my life, and threaten and seek my destruction. I never hurt any of you, as I said before, nor ever persuaded any to severity against you. I have long ago publicly proposed terms on which we might live together as neighbours in peace. But destruction and misery are in your way (that I have observed), and the way of peace you have not known.

There are three things which alienate common Christians from you more than all other disputes. 1. That you can go so openly against the plainest words of God, (as in blotting out the second commandment, in notoriously contradicting 1 Cor. xii. Rom. xiv. and xv. about the terms of church union and communion; about Latin prayers and worship to the ignorant, denying the cup to the laity, denying sense in transubstantiation).

2. That you befriend ignorance so much, by the said Latin worship, forbidding most to read the Scripture translated, and accuse God's Spirit of writing obscurely, to cover this.

3. That your religion liveth by cruelty and blood, and cannot stand without it. Which at least in prudence you should hide as long as you can; or at least not design to make the ignorant and vicious Protestants, your proselytes and agents conjunctly to ruin those whom your consciences know to be the most conscientious and seriously religious.

By which already the flock of Christ do (under your sheep's clothing) so judge of you by your fruits, that if any man that is called a Protestant clergyman, do but write and preach for cruelty and ruin towards serious conscienable

Christians, people by this very mark do presently suspect that he is either a Papist or so near them as that he is ready to pass over to them, whom he so assisteth in destructive work.

Quest. 'What must be the cure of malignity?'

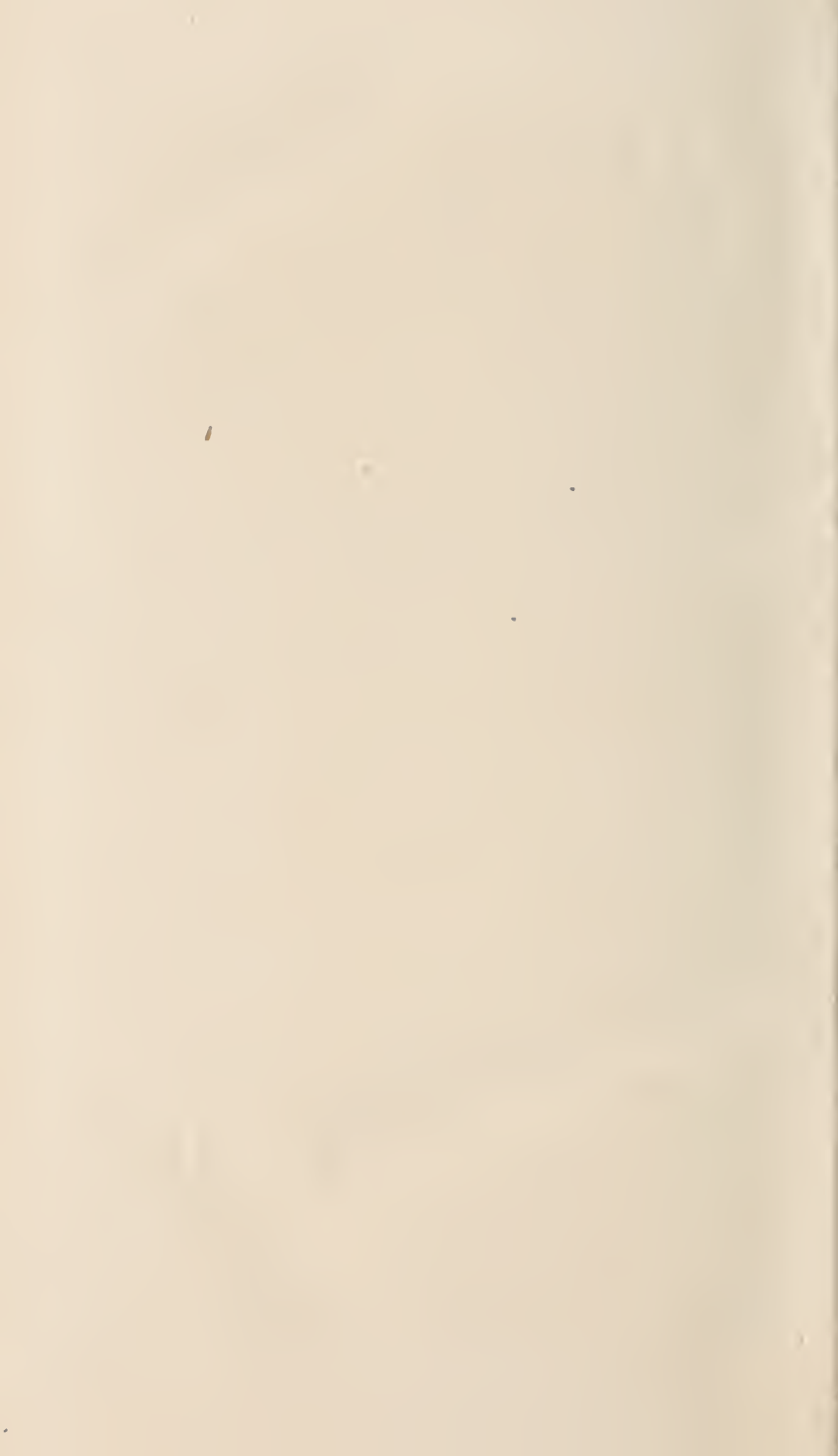
Ans. When the heel of the holy seed is sufficiently bruised, the serpent's head must be broken. 1. The war in heaven which formerly cast down the dragon, must break the supreme serpentine head. 2. Then his heads military on earth will be broken. 1. The usurping universal head called ecclesiastical. 2. The national serpentine heads. 1. Exterior; Mahometan and heathen. 2. Interior; called falsely Christian. 1. Serpentine monarchs, that war against Christ. 2. Serpentine prelates and their patrons, that fight against Christ as in his own name, and by his pretended commission.

And all this by Christ, and not by sinful means.

Reformation is begun 'à minoritis' at the lowest, for personal salvation of the elect. But 'a majoritis,' at the heads for public welfare. And God must raise reforming princes and pastors to that end.

END OF THE TENTH VOLUME.





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